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BY
HENDRY DURIE ROSS



#### THE GRAFTON PRESS

**PUBLISHERS** 

NEW YORK



FS 3535 0839 F9

A. 895046

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In the United States and Great Britain

#### To E. M.

Whether we be bred in the Home-Land, or In the mightier "Empire beyond the narrow seas," or in the One First Republic; whether we be entirely expatriated in the shape of German Philosopher, French Marshal, Russian Noble, Turkish Official or Indian Chief. Still we turn, across the generations, to Scotiand, naming her

#### PATRIA.

#### "Mine Ain Land,"

Scotland has not only been the chief factor in the making of The One First Empire (bear witness her Thought, her humane and democratic colonization, her success in peaceful commerce, her skill in "The Noble Game of War"), but she has done even better. Individuality counts for most; and Scottish men and women are the most individualized.

It is my privilege to have, in you, a friend who typifies the blossom-form of humanity at its highest. And you are Scotland's make.

Permit, then, that the least of the Scots (albeit a colonial) dedicate this too imperfect work to you,



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### From Far Dakota and Otherwhere

#### CLOTILDE

1

HE place is a town in the Red River Valley, the time 1877.

The "New Comers" had organised as a set off, or rather complement, to the "Old Settlers' League," and this night finds us at the first ball given by the former guild, the same being held in the Court House.

Van de Graffe arrived late; but found a partner notwithstanding, herself having been tardy—which was lucky, seeing the men outnumbered the women three to one there; wherefore the man coming late was, as a general thing, "out of luck." As De Graffe piloted her through the crowd upon the floor, his attention to his girlish partner's constant chatter ceased upon a sudden. He was no less surprised than gratified to behold his neighbour Clotilde also dancing, and, as if to favour his waning interest in his present companion, whose too copious small talk began to bore him, the music then ceased, abruptly as usual. Thereupon, having conducted his lady to her place, he, as soon as civility permitted, left her; but 'twas too late. Clotilde had accepted other escort to supper, he perceived.

The disappointed man lounged across to one of the floor

managers.

"Hal," he bespoke that functionary, "what makes the men stare so? Anything wrong with my toggery?"

"Of course! Thought you'd have known better by this time. Sport a dress coat, will you?"

"I thought to try an innovation. It's about time! I'm no tender-foot, either. In civilisation they would set the dogs on a man that went out o' nights in a 'Prince Albert,' even if they spared him jail. 'A new and dangerous species

of tramp that,' says they, 'I guess.'"

"So? Culture changes with longitude. Five years ago a buckskin suit with guns on the side was the proper thing here. You ought to know better than to dare the boys this way. I wore a dress coat once out here, just after I came—three years past. You'd better look out for Tim White. He's sure to be on your track; put a chunk of stinking cheese in one claw of my coat that time; couldn't think what ailed folk until I reached for my gloves."

"A good trick to play just once. After that it gets monotonous. Like to see him try it on again, for all he's

thick in the neck."

"Trick nothing! How d'you propose to hit a man, unless his fists are up, when he just sits there and laughs, and laughs, and laughs—the more you rave—with half a hundred other asses braying chorus? I've been there. You keep clear of him, I tell you; else take your med'cine and say nothing, notice nothing. Then the joke's on him; likewise the drinks—maybe champagne, seein' it's to-night."

"I'm not caught yet."

Having satisfied his hunger and dutifully greeted various acquaintances, De Graffe, being now partnerless, seated himself in the embrasure of a window and began to watch with rising zest the proceedings of the largest gathering of the sort he had ever beheld convened in the valley.

shall evolve from the race-blending in the course of the The Britisher is the man of most mixed lineage in Europe. His blooded horse and mastiff dog are samples of the same factor among the lower animals proper creatures all—with the best of records. If interbreeding, in the end, signifies excellence in the progenv, then the West has a high destiny ahead."

Here were Anglo-Celts of Britain, sons of old Gaul a few, descendants of these mother lands a many. Canadians both French and British, Yankees and Southerners. faces clearly Norse, and others Tentonic. Some few exhibited the complexion and physique of Southern Europeans, Spanish, Italian, Greek even; nor were traces wanting entirely of unconquerable Judah, the demarcation line being drawn only over against Cathav and Libva. These might not enter, save possibly in sudra guise as pullers of corks, or porters of ice cream.

The district Judge was an old settler. De Graffe noticed that the Jurist's handsome daughters danced on occasion with their "hired man." To have called that young fellow "servant" would have eventuated in a fight. He was a son of one of the wealthiest farmers in western Ontario, in search of independence and experience, presumably. Though his present partner's ease and gracious demeanour bespoke a convent's polish, he was none behind her in appointment or in address. Beholding Miss Smith's lovely olive skin, blueblack hair, and superb dusky eyes a stranger might have suspected Spanish descent; the initiated, however, knew her for a fourth descendant of a Cree squaw on the maternal side.

That fairy in mauve, so blonde and blooming, thought the spectator, is a figure presentable in any assembly. dancing is perfection. Furthermore her English is better selected than that of most Americans, being absolutely slang-

less, clearly enunciated, and perfectly constructed. Many of the "merchants'" wives, though, eye the beauty askance. True, they had called upon her—at the instance of their husbands—whose views were politic, or else new minted from the lately established "Lodge"—but how should these high and mighty dames of established precedence deign to closer acquaintance, seeing that only six months ago the prosperous, clever and well-born young lumberman, smitten by her Norse loveliness, had wedded this nobody; thereby depriving her mother of that good dame's chief assistance in con-

ducting the business of the town laundry?

One of the sets now forming consists, in part, of the town telegraph operator, a stylish little woman, rumoured somewhat of a rake, accompanied by a tall, fair, unassuming young man of self-reliant bearing, whose normal attire—the cordurov and spurs of the ranchman—were here exchanged for one of the few full dress suits to be seen. The very well informed knew him heir to an English baronetcy, and the rest of the world as "a dam'd nice fellow-don't know where he came from." Opposite to these, led forth the genial Prussian drover and contractor, his partner, scion of genuine " F. F. V." stock. The commandant of the Garrison, who, with many of his officers, had driven a score of miles to be present, danced with the mayor's wife, whose lesser half, now a magnate in finance, and chief engineer of the political machine, aforetime held an intermediate position betwixt "heeler" and "boss" in the ward politics of Chicago, and came first to the territory as a "carpetbagger." St. Clair and a French Canadian girl went to complete that set. another more plebeian square the prettiest woman was a Mennonite born; her husband, that Irish sergeant on the way to win the straps of a second lieutenant, had, while peacefully foraging across the border after prairie chicken, seen the girl of his heart in the Communal village on the Reserve. Love in

the end had bidden her set at defiance Kaiser, Mir, and parents. Wherefore, by this her marriage she had gotten welcome demission and excommunication from the community of Teuto-Slavic Quakers.

Of course there is much differentiation into coterie here; nature, prejudice, idiosyncrasy binding those of similiar traditions and culture into groups, broken in upon, necessarily, by incursions from neighbouring cliques and cabals. Youth is the most noticeable adjunct everywhere. There is vim, physique, activity, ardour, brightness of eye, headlongness here, in pleasure, as yesterday and to-morrow in affairs, but the sage balance of eld is for the most part a-wanting; which phenomenon may, speaking from a business standpoint, in part account for "booms" and their disastrous reactions.

There presently appeared a disturbing factor in a more distant set, and chaos came about. Few, even of those who have been taught, have ear sufficient to accomplish gracefully a figure in a square dance. Perfect training in the mere strategy of the figures gives only a glozing show of accuracy, if the inborn and unteachable rhythmic sense be wanting. Yet everybody thinks the feat an easy one, for the most part. Now an adventurous youth, clearly unacquainted with the rudiments of the dance, participated in the present. very first step had been an error. His floundering uneasiness over re-repeated blunders deprived him of all presence Wrath or amusement caused other members of the set to neglect the time beat. Their dissonance caused sundry participants in neighbouring sets to do likewise, the shouts of the "caller off" to the contrary notwithstanding. Soon the floor was covered with a procession of dervishes, each dancing on his or her own account. Here gaped a damsel partnerless and lost; there a pair swept bowing to a vacant spot where a side couple should have been; yet another lone man roared athwart the din, seeking to ascertain the location

of his lady, or their vis-à-vis. 'Twas a Lancers no more, but a mere pow-wow. The voice of the "caller off" had risen to an eldritch falsetto, like a hawk's screech. "Swearing like a little man, right out loud," to use the subsequent editorial comment, he swooped, again hawk-like, upon the author of the confusion—for he had marked him from the beginning—clutched the shrinking, luckless wight, conducted him unresisting and ashamed to the door, and there having arrived, adjured him.

"If ye'h want ta' dance, go home and play it alone—or else to th' injuns—or t'hell, if ye'h want ta'," but on pain of sudden and terrible death,—"T' keep away from here anyhow." One single, uncontainable kick sped the failure on his downstairs way. Then from the pausing, expectant crowd went up a shout of laughter—western; more appreciative,

more inextinguishable than that of Homer's men.

De Graffe was mopping the mirthful tears and otherwise subsiding from convulsions when a wayward influence changed and contracted his features from lines of merriment, instantaneously to those of pain, astonishment, inquiry. He had

smelt a perfume.

"Faint, spirit faint, even in nearness to her," thus ran the retrospection, "faint as a new-born breath . . . . majestic, luring, as Venus' cestus . . . Yes, surely 'twas hers, this subtle, potent, evanescent, imperious, fickle wraith . . . from what flower garnered,—or tropic bloom, or northern frail violet? Whether at all extract of any blossom, or perchance not vegetal, but a natal gift to the woman's witching personality . . . . a mystery."

The single waft seemed to have come from some near quarter, whence in a cardroom he heard mingling female voices, not cognisable. It came and was gone. His consciousness of present things departed. Memory reft him from the garish Dakota ballroom to remembered heights

overlooking the Hudson. He is again a new graduated Columbia man, supposedly recuperating from the strain of examinations. He reviews, lives over again, the memorable time of a first love.

Men, who to-morrow will greet the genial comrade by his nighest name, abbreviated to "Loo," pass, casting disdain at him out of their eyes because of that "claw hammer." Women, some approvingly, some even invitingly, glance likewise at the high-statured, high-featured dreamer; marking him perchance—black haired, with little colour, lean, agile as the leopards on England's shield—but he is oblivious. His thoughts have reached Saratoga now; and therewith comes her image; thenceforward a fixed one in his mind. sees her, betimes, languorous, fragile, delicate, anon animate as morning, capricious always, drawing men's regard as the moon the sea, infinitely resourceful in the game of hearts, a very crowning achievement of social culture; but a hothouse bloom, not ever touched by alien wild winds nor strengthening frosts, the pathetic appeal to chivalrous treatment showing in eye and drooped lip. Some real delicacy of fibre together with much exquisitely worn exaggeration of the same, rendered the effect. Guinevere bore the mint mark of society's best, frankness, tact, policy, finesse, superficial culture, plus capacity for real conversation; and more than ordinary feminine charm thereto.

Oh, winning as the cooing dove, she swam to his arms in retrospect. Soon gone—bright, light, reckless, restless as the sea mew—gone too, ruthless as the poised or pouncing falcon, his abiding concept of her now.

After illusions had begun to give way before the lessons of experience he knew her for a woman superficially sensitive, betimes sentimental, yet at the core of being egotistic and hard; in reality perhaps too silly, too unreasoning to take thought of other ways. From pampered childhood up she

had come closely in contact with the wordling he and she, developing, as she matured, a quick intuition as to things amatory, and comprehending humanity in but the one phase -the social and trifling; as to larger provinces of conception she was without receptiveness or judgment; wholly lacking in definite volition, albeit stubborn.

What dear depths of true womanliness he dreamed to discern in her "that once of old"; capacities for all graces made apparent in her changeful moods, now joyous as childhood, then dependant all as girlhood, anon regal as the zoned Semiramis; the bliss to him, all too despondent to hope for her condescension, when the regal creature had first con-

fessed her care—and how it all came back again!

But when his "crank" notions, breath of his life, had come to be broached, dwelt upon, insisted upon, there had followed a letting in of noon's light into love's dim bowers. His opinions regarding the duties of wealth were a stumbling block to her understanding. What to her this talk of obligations? What were riches' functions if not to minister solely to the elaboration of life-life as she knew it-to fill full the measures of changeful joys? Duty was to do as one's own "order" did. Elsewise "duty" was a word dim, awful, not to be pondered upon overmuch; too terrifying even for Lenten meditations. His living concept of the word she thus translated into mechanical terms.

"I admit that your opinions do you credit. 'Tis considered the right thing to be advanced; it gives one the reputation of well-cleverness-originality; very well for pastime or day-dreaming, but- Please be practical! What have you in common with the lower classes?"

Thus would she meet his enthusiasm for reforms (impossible in one generation, save by violence) set forth by him with the serene self-certainty of youth. Even though he were Utopian, so ran on his meditation, was it love that met his

insistance? Was it not rather incomprehensive obstinacy, the outcome of luxurious self-love—even more than conventional training—philistine indeed? At such times he had seen his sweetheart clear to the mind's centre. Then mighty affection, large tolerance, like a wave would go over him, tossing and rending the cold, clear, suggestion of mere intelligence. Doubt, revolt, surrender swayed him alternate.

Capricious fancy brought him West Point, large broad moonlight, calm flood and frowning heights, stars, and the woman-star of hearts, turning here, before his astonished ken, to a comet, wreckful, baleful. The things his understanding had so often discerned—only to be repudiated heartward for disloyalty-made certain now by demeanour and word; wherein were displayed all of pert instability, fickleness, entire devotion to things material and luxurious. woman whose virtue had lain in his hand-merciful, while hot with youth's heart-beat—not too scrupulous a hand always like an apple to be plucked, now avows her waning liking; while delicate innuendo gives his scarified boy's vanity to guess at the supplanter in the person of a not too refined nor youthful plutocrat; whose social ambition, vanity, and mayhap overforced sensuality, makes him willing to purchase a gracious virginity. Such is the man's reverie, pardonably brutal, all self-centred, partly unjust, yet having grounds Some passing objective interest rouses him momently, to fade again soon. Then he reverts.

He had been unable to give her up definitely, even upon that revelation. He possessed a comfortable fortune, but not a sufficient one in her sight. To keep her troth he speculated like an inexperienced man, and lost all in consequence.

Indication of facts remain, though this tale displays but his way of looking at them. Out of all her caprices, her selfish heart had singled this one as the strongest. Guinevere was not without a rudimentary conscience, so she occasionally

#### From Far Dakota and Otherwhere

upbraided herself for inconstancy; the outcome of which would be an exhibition of renewed, persisting affection. But irksome discontent at his stand against her importunities, and ever-fluctuating, hypercritical mutability, might make her, next day, cold as winter air. When his financial difficulties came on she had commiserations, caresses, impotent suggestions, mixed with veiled, tolerant surprise at his predicament. Dilatoriness, constrained consent, covered her baseless visions of improbable possibilities. Nor dared she be mercifully cruel; but hesitated to give herself the one evanescent pang a farewell would inflict.

De Graffe "went west" full of forebodings. After an intermitting correspondence, misery of a suspended doom on his part, irritation belike on hers, separation did its work. News came of her engagement. Previous disappointments mitigated the shock. Nevertheless it stunned and numbed

him for a time.

Even after these seven years of wandering, of effort, of ultimate success in the work he had chosen to simplify him, when that perfume found his nostril, bringing back the refluent flood of memories—the days and ways he had abandoned—its subtle suggestion stung to revolt almost. What God hath power over bygone things?

"Is it worth a tear, is it worth an hour to think? . . . . "

Nay, but

<sup>&</sup>quot;The delight of thy face, and the sound of thy feet, and the wind of thy tresses,
And all of a man that regrets, and all of a maid that allures."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Hold on, though! (H'm, I hav'n't thought to quote verse in self-pity for one while before.) Those fever-cooling lines were writ for women of another mould, for the Vala, for in-

stance, who swirls stately by there." (Gentler than sleep, truer than truth, Clotilde moved as a midsummer's ocean waves, swinging to rhythmic nature's tidal music.) "Here were peace after sorrow. Even lulling Hesperia!"

This Prussian peasant girl was the fairest and stateliest woman present. Now fully aware, he remembered that he had actually seen her reënter the room after supper, without consciously marking; remembered thereto that she

was shy as a child while in unwonted company.

Had she not glanced expectantly at him as if looking for recognition, or to give it if she might? He grew wrathful at himself for having allowed dreams to come betwixt him and his manners. "Would she be hurt?" She must think him a "cad"! No, no! She would not dream that surely. The notion made his pulse sink a little. Even the dismal, impotent sorrow and wrath of his late retrospections had not done so much.

But this was his friend. A woman, yet a comrade; frank as a man; not the recreant mistress of boy love. "Comrade-ship," quoth he inly, "is robust, surviving and over-ruling customary amenity; is not super-sensitive, nor prone to think evil. She is superbly handsome and beautiful at once—with

such plastic perfection and such glory of color!"

In this democratic assembly it were idle to speculate how she came, but he surmised (correctly, as it appears) that Judge Smith's daughters had forced her there. They, he knew, made much association with Clotilde. When himself had offered his escort she had refused; which, while it hurt, had gratified his conservative sense. He believed yet in chaperonage—this radical individualist. Always his heart beat higher as he marked her grace of carriage, and her subdued ease. He sat on, enjoying the noble poise, the gracious self-reliance, the more for his perception of her dimpling, smiling, frank enjoyment of the novel pleasures.

#### H

Adjoining the sections owned by De Graffe and his neighbour St. Clair the land, all around, was settled Clotilde's father was one of them. by Germans. The first time De Graffe ever saw the girl her resemblance to some picture he had seen, whereof the name evaded him, struck him forcibly. The now, that she was robed in long sweeping gown of faint blue or green, for movement and light affected the shade, the likeness was the more confirmed; the clear cut, large, fair features, the pure rose tints of the complexion, the abundant wheat-yellow hair, the Amazonian arms, the deep bosom, the sinuous waist, the splendid hips and the foam-swift feet were all Teutonic, of an almost idealised type. Who could doubt that she were deadly strong, fearless and self-sufficient, as beseemed her battle-call of a name? Not fierce at all, nor overbold, while frank and infinitely debonair. One of Shakespeare's women, sweet-natured, sensitive as Undine, a joy to look at, a creature to unbend the brows of hate, of care, of memory.

One Sunday afternoon during the previous summer he had been mooning about in his lonely cottage, disconsolate and restless, irking at the tendencies that had fixed him in that walk of life. His achievements—fortunes—successes—dwindled to futilities on such occasions, sorely mortifying his normal wont of self-content. He had nothing congenial to employ himself upon at the moment. In deference to custom, to neighbouring opinions, and to the laws of the Territory, he could not toil physically.

He would have violated all these to go a-hunting, but the season was not yet come. He was satiated with books and his piano sounded tinny. Dinner too, lay heavy (Cook being holidaying, he had prepared the meal himself). He could

concentrate upon nothing. Ennui gripped him, together with a touch of the blues. The splenetic mood was too tense for tobacco to relieve, or for sleep to break. He prowled about like a dyspeptic panther. There came prospect of relief when he heard a low knock; the which he adjured yet testily to—"Come in, can't you?" Beholding the embarrassment of the unexpected caller, repentfully he called upon his normal geniality; but all the resources of his hospitality were unsuccessful for a while. Yet, in time, when Otto found that "Herr De Graffe" spoke bad German and kept

good beer, his restraint passed, in a measure.

Sharpers in the nature of "claim jumpers" were plentiful at that period. Their machinations had already succeeded in ousting some foreign-speaking settlers from lands of which they were in lawful possession. Knowing him a native and cultured in affairs. De Graffe's neighbour now sought his advice in that relation. The former took time to wonder at the civic disparity between these foreigners, on the one hand, and Americans and Canadians on the other, touching litiga-To the native, or the British-born citizen, law is a thing tolerably familiar in outline, an institution to be regarded, entitled to all respect, but no more to be superstitiously feared than the rack of long ago, a creature of the Common's will, which if it dare obtrude upon, or be oppressive towards its creator, quickly finds itself abolished. with the continentals of Europe (save perhaps some mad anarchists), jurisprudence seems to be a fetish, not to subserve a use, but to adore blindly, and to obey question-Proceeding from a semi-divine source, it is not to be treated upon an equality of standing, much less to be familiarly handled; even if perverted, it is not to be fleered at: being irresponsible, unmoved, as awful in majesty as an Alpine summit.

The specific scamps in Otto's affair, the host declared,

were "bluffing." Should they dare resort, as they threatened, to a "contest" themselves would be most in danger. He put the still hesitating German upon the right track for reliable legal advice, and then they had some more beer. Thereafter Otto was De Graffe's to command, at once tutor in agriculture and liegeman in all else; the sentiment partaking of that awe which the Teuton's ancestors might have cherished for some kindly necromancer who devoted his arts to purposes of beneficence, while scoffing at popular, legal, or ecclesiastical censure; for this light way of admeasuring the terrors of Courts savoured to the old-world rustic's judgment—of a nobler sort of civic blasphemy.

A great resemblance was to be observed betwixt father and daughter. There was the same splendid, knit, physical massiveness about both, tempered in the blooming child with grace and young activity, the same clear chiselling in the features, so far as the sire's leonine beard permitted his to be discerned. The identical placidity dominated the eyes of both. The Auroral tintings of the girl's gave place in the man's face to weather-beaten wholesomeness, the skin graven with many lines. Time, labour, care, a curbed temperament and arduous days spoke in the stoop of Otto's wide, thick shoulders.

Clotilde was reading "Cymbeline" the first time that ever De Graffe saw her. Her opinion upon Imogen was no schoolgirl's, he found. His urbanity forbade the questions he should have wished to ask, but her frankness solved that. Their Pastor in the Fatherland, a mighty scholar, had a cultivated wife as well. The then little Clotilde was a favourite of both the good folk. The wife had taught the maid much of the best music and a great regard for their native bards, while the Pastor looked well to her English speech and reading. Of that household also had come her manners, so far in advance of her station. Thence also came

her ability to cook, in a civilised and cultured manner, cakes toothsome and varied. This was an agreeable change in De Graffe's diet, albeit he had a French-Canadian man cook, whom many envious neighbours looked upon as a chef.

They became fast friends, without suspicion of flirtation. Her English soon lost most of its remaining irregularities, while his German took on a less archaic form. Then, too, he could not fail to mark how she watched (and cross-questioned, for reasons) his construction, and enunciation; so he began to drop slang. On her part, Clotilde never repeated an error, once he gave her the proper idiom. This too, he remarked, wondering at her retentiveness, not knowing that after bedtime she would rehearse every one of the new phrases, words and accents; losing sleep, but fixing the knowledge irrevocably in her memory. Thus he overestimated her aptness, for she was pure Teuton, slow but retentive; as contrasted with the prehensile semi-Celtic nature, erroneously called Anglo-Saxon.

It fell betimes, when lonesomeness, weariness of the flesh, depression, or epicurean hunger beleaguered, straightway he sought out his she-comrade, meeting on all occasions sympathy and solace. The difference of sex, perhaps too consciously ignored to be genuine (but sincere, if believing that he believed, for he was no accurate self-knower) made the

friendship piquant, unique and alluring.

One trait, alike in father and child, galled him and would not down before either indignation, sarcasm or humour, to wit: an over-respectfulness, natural in their view; for not only his speech and demeanor bespoke him of the upper class, but the "Van" prefix bid these regard him as noble, notwithstanding his pre-revolutionary, New Holland ancestry. To the old country plebeian the noble and high placed was an institution as natural as daylight. There was naught of subservience in the attitude. The "Van" or "Von" was

as much a matter of course as were they. Before he arrived at a reasonable conclusion, De Graffe suspected momently, that this was a courteous ruse, disguising some faint suspicion of his sincerity, assumed by them to keep him at a stand, outside of hearth friendship; whereat he would sulk by the week, nor go anigh them. But surmise and the consequent resolution would melt anon, when, having met one or other casually, he listened to their undoubtable expressions of disappointment, or the conjecture, implied, that he had wearied of them.

On a time, after the aforesaid suspicion was laid, while at Otto's house, a photograph dropped out of De Graffe's breast pocket. He had been searching old documents that day; amongst them a packet of letters, the which, and the picture, he had thrust aside, whistling amusedly, to be re-read at leisure. Clotilde was in a somewhat abnormal humour, elfish as opposed to her wonted placidity. She seized upon the picture, and, marking his eagerness to have it back, perversely refused to return it until she knew its history. Goodhumoured persistence and protest were useless. Finally she defied, doubting his muscular ability to take it by the strong hand, his latest threat. Provoked at the imputation, he went about, chivalrously enough, to do so, but found that the milkwhite arm was strong, so strong that he must put out power enough to cause hurt, if he would win in that way.

Then he committed an error. Changing tactics, he did a stupid thing. Instead of hurting, he kissed her—very nearly—the miss was owing to her adroitness—in fact, so very nearly as possibly to make it worse than had the attempt

been a success.

Clotilde, with one splendid gesture, set herself free—blue icy flame as to the eyes—speechless. He was self-possessed enough to be a little glad at her ire, gentle enough to be a trifle abashed as well. Her wrath, passing quickly, changed

to a proud hurt look. That touched him. Yet he would not acknowledge compunction but, at some expense, smiled derisively; taking thought of the photograph's original's fine scorn for such vulgarly rustic doings.

"It is little to smile at," exclaimed Clotilde. "I had

thought better of you than such-such stupidity."

She had chosen the biting word. Accusation of great villainy he could have taken conceitedly, but that "stupidity" was humiliating.

Wherefore he replicated maliciously. "Thanks! I have

seen Karl kiss you. You liked it."

"That does make no difference. You are not Karl. Karl is my cousin. We have grown together, since we were babies too. I am no American to be a hypocrite and forget the playmate when I grow to ceremony. Besides, my cheek is my partner's in the kissing dance where you saw that. I did kiss him when he went away, too."

He began a dignified apology—floundered—assumed a frosty height. "Perhaps an American—" He saw a laugh in her eyes. "Why hurt the girl?" (inly)—then aloud, "I can only say—Ah! you would laugh, would you? Then I am sorry, genuinely so, if I have offended you. Won't that do? Besides, you're not hurt, you know."

"You are good—Yes! you are. I should not have spoken so. It was mean and false. It is all nothing. But—but

you-you are a gentleman and-"

He snorted like Job's war horse. "That's worse!"

"Ah," she gently replied. "Would you then have tried to punish her joke so?" pointing to the cause of the strife which De Graffe, unhesitating in sincerity, picked up, rent, cast into the stove; answering, "If she were as well worth, or had provoked me so—yes! even seven years ago. Now I'd do it, for mere deviltry, any time."

Perhaps Clotilde believed the spontaniety of words and

act; yet she tolled her head, incredulous.

They were closer friends afterwards, by reason of increased mutual respect. Men like a woman to be chaste of lip; and women, I fear, like a man to retain, over his chivalry, a latent but rousable spice of the ancestral savage whose wooing was done by main force.

Gradually the girl learned, by piecing stray hints together which he dropped in anecdote at intervals, many things concerning his past life and ways of thought; and put a more sorrowful construction on the circumstances than his present state of mind might warrant. It was with amazement that he, coming once out of a short reverie, after one of their confidences, surprised her gazing at him with nearly moistened eyes. He indicted her of the offence and she, out of a sympathetic heart, and unsophisticated, pleaded guilty, saying in mitigation:

"You did look so sad that I was sorry for you, mine

friend."

"And was it for me, you kind one? But you were mistaken. I suppose one looks sad always when thinking or remembering—glad when hoping. But know this: I hate to be pitied. Especially when there's no reason for it, at least none for my past. And yet 'twas kindly thought."

Her continental frankness, differing from our Englishspeaking reserve, suspicioned no rebuff, and in this instance

rightly.

"Ah, do not talk lightly. You are wise and honest. You have had a sad experience. You went—you came—'out west,' into exile (it is not like your home) for your opinions' sake. You have the cause of justice and the people at heart and you are not happy. I am not sorry then—I am proud of—mine friend!"

She caught herself, too late. Her face flamed, while ap-

prehension shone in her eyes; then with drooping countenance she fled incontinent.

"You good—Eh?—Ho! Clotilde!—What is up? certainly acts very unwontedly to-day, uncommonly freaky, so to say. Wonder if my brusqueness offended her? "Cause of justice and the people." Cause of fiddlestick and a charlatan. That was when I was a boy. I must be a demagogue, if my talk raised that notion. I came west—what for? That's the question of the present day, as Jacobson said. I thought I knew then, but Fate knew better, I'm thinking. I know though, because I was, am, and will be merely a crank; for ever and ever, and an ass ditto. She should know, does know, that, anyhow. I'm not a bit sorry—for coming; but as to her knowing-well, yes, I am that, too. There's no danger for her in that case. I wish she wasn't so keen-her knowing-I'm a fool, I said, and she-she is a woman, a woman fit to teach mankind what real womanhood is. And that's no small word in these days of perversion."

#### Ш

De Graffe, free of retrospections, followed Clotilde's figure and caught her regard directed upon him, a proudly asking look in eyes otherwise a trifle surprised in their expression. When his look answered, hers wavered and she coloured. Now the dance ends and she is momently alone. He moves athwart towards her. She brightens. Again that reminiscent perfume wafts to him anew. He begins to speculate if spells are so mythical after all, turns, looks, beholds Guinevere. The recognition is instantaneous, and mutual.

"Gu—Mrs. Simpson?"
"You?—Here?—Louis?"

The hands touched a little perturbedly—all the agitation either displayed. The starry-eyed woman was the Guinevere of old. Of old? No. A harder composure stamped the fine features, that buckler nature gives to woman or diplomat or unsearchable Indian.

They chatted—fenced—about immaterial things. In the end, this: "I remember hearing of your coming out hereabout, years ago; but thought you had abandoned it long ago. Is it not true that you were your Uncle Vaughn's heir?"

"Quite true, but, you see, I have opinions yet—am," drily, "a slow thinker, perhaps, and was always 'brutally determined!'"

The woman seemed to search her interlocutor more closely. The ironic, half-contemptuous ending, following upon a beginning in the old tone, bespoke change in his attitude towards her and the world. She interposed no word; but a shade of a shade, in eyes and in brow, indicated annoyance.

"But," De Graffe went on with an intensifying touch of amusement in his tones, "may I ask how I find you here—

among the barbarians?"

She regarded him very fixedly then, seeking for an indication of some previous knowledge; finding none, the exquisite shoulders went up a hair's breadth. How well he knew that motion, peculiar to her among many. His critique had progressed so far as to assert that all the fair gracious modesty of the virgin passed away was replaced by none of the poise and goodly bearing of matronhood—a sterile splendid blossom of a woman, but left. She had the air of one expecting homage forthwith, as of right. Her level regard, had he named, he would have called "fine" in a man, too "you-be-dam'd" for a woman.

"Can you not surmise? What brings any of us here?" She swept the room at a look, disdain predominant. Then

that loss of respect became self-conscious and avowed in him. Many years had it taken for the sentiment to crystallise. He took the "us" hint aptly. The conservative is inexpungable if grafted upon childhood and early youth, even though that youth develops most radical opinions. De Graffe was of the latest reforming school, wherein extremes meet. He did not believe in divorce; was only glad to hear that Mrs. Simpson was engaged for the next dance; and looked about for Clotilde, not pressing his interlocutor for an extra even. One would scarcely have guessed that dismay at a shattered idol's case, together with some contemptuous pity, contended in him, nor that indignation and depreciation held sway in her brain, while the two continued to converse in superficial amenity. The details she gave are not apposite here, and may be intromitted; only these following: De Graffe lost his total indifference of feature. despite a will to remain frigid; he took on, progressively, something of the port of a spiritual director, as he afterwards named it.

Finally quoth she, "You are—will be—my friend still, Louis?" accompanying the query with a modulation, a look, that once would have bewildered his reason.

"Be sure of that!"—meaning if he meant anything definite, that he was weakness' friend, and that his good wishes withal should be exhibited, not as she wished, but as he willed. "You insist upon my opinion, or advice, then?"

"Yes, surely yes, Louis."

Thinking he was touched, Guinevere rehearsed the circumstances, perhaps more fully, at least as fully, as to her counsel.

"Your lawyers are the best authority upon your standing in court. About that it would be impertinent for me to speak. Your—husband, you say, is all in fault. Pardon my brutality. But you have means enough, I believe.

## From Far Dakota and Otherwhere

Would not a separation do as well? People have not begun to gabble yet, I know. You have no idea of the ordeal ahead."

Bluntness was not habitual with him; but then revenge was sweet here, where he might pride in combining it with an act he esteemed righteous. Her gaze, so astonished and upbraiding, with a lure in it, too, bade him modify tone and

speak more complacently.

"Surely you will not think the worse of a friend's speaking his truth. What is concealment but insincerity? I cannot help saying that I reprehend divorce. You also repudiate it, as an institution. Don't you? But, if divorce must be, one's own State is the place for vindication. There is a double suspicion of foreign divorces."

She was no less pragmatic. "You will not, cannot help me?" Flute-sweet and persuasive sounded that thrilling voice.

"Always, if this must be."

"Ah, you are changed, so changed!"

"Yes, yes," he sighed—for memory's sake. "That is the fate of us all."

Just here Guinevere's partner claimed her. Straightway De Graffe sought out Clotilde; and, e'er reaching her, began to find that he had been under some strain during the interview. The fight with emotion had left its marks, it is true; but the very presence of the girl quieted him more than his volition could have done.

The wave mounted to her true cheek as he said, "And may I have this dance, or is it too late? I had not expected this pleasure or I should have been here earlier. You stole a march on me."

"I did not know whether I should come. It is never too late. I shall be glad."

"I am fortunate. Have you enjoyed this evening, then,

as I hope you have?"—looking into eyes which he supposed the dance had made so joyous.

"Indeed I have been happy," she answered; which reply he interpreted in his own way, the same not helping his to similar emotion.

They waltzed. "You do dance well," said she, as they

strolled about after several rounds.

"Come! Come! That flattery is too gross. I do not, 'being mechanical'; but you—you large, light-footed person! Why fairy stories are true, I find. You change to air and rhythm. Said I not well, Germania?"

The conceit pleased; of course she had heard of Germania, long ago. With a bird-like flex of the neck she looked up.

"Why doubtful? It's so! Let me disgrace your grace

again, if you are rested."

The animation passed. "No, I do tire you—keep you. You have met an old friend." Well she divined whom.

"How do you know 'twas not an enemy? And I want to

be tired, please."

"Not so. I do not believe it. So gracious a lady! You

do look noble together." This in pure simplicity.

"Say that again, or send me away, and we shall quarrel. You think me insincere. I had not expected that from you. I guess you want to be rid of me though, the others—"

"It is mean to say so. You do dance well. As for the

others—that——"

"Say, 'mine friend'—quick!"

"Mine friend—only—"

"Blessings on your sweet temper. I am a brute. I'll tell you—you know anyhow—that was my nearest friend once. But we change every seven years."

"I like not-I do not like that. It is cynical and not like

you at all."

"That's true in a way. It's the other me. However, I

would not exchange my-well, never mind. You would not believe it anyhow."

Guinevere and her lieutenant swung past, just here, the couples crossing, so that the women were aface at times. Then might have been seen, exchanged, a mighty regard—swift and inclusive. The mondaine's nonchalance was blent with that quiet, unexceptional, overlooking contempt of patrician for plebeian, while yet constrained to admit the latter's potency. 'Twas Hera losing the apple. The girl's was an expression of composed admiration, in grapple with a worthy self-consciousness of power. 'Twas Artemis, goddess of forest and of heath.

The time of departure having arrived, De Graffe escorted Clotilde to the carriage. When she had gone, feeling as if virtue had passed out of the place, and disdaining any less rhythmic partner, the fellow went to smoke upon a tiny balcony overlooking the main door of the building. Athwart, was the entrance to the grounds, where he noticed a group of tough-looking characters loitering; also he marked that beneath him, in the lower story, in the Register's office in fact, there burned a light. Hardly had he observed these things when the light went out; one figure emerged and joined those at the gate, while another, a clerk of the office, evidently, in evening dress, presently entered the ballroom. De Graffe thought it strange that people should be making "a search" at this hour. A low-voiced colloquy began among the folk at the gates. The air was still and moist, and carried sounds further than these men thought. Primarily, the smoker paid no more attention than to surmise that they might be members of that persistent gang of "claim jumpers" who had of late annoyed his neighbours, but as the excitement waxed among the speakers their words necessarily grew louder. Whole sentences sometimes obtruded themselves upon his ear, disturbing pleasant thoughts. Then suddenly he overheard

something which made him listen with deliberate intent. His eyes began to widen and to gleam, and his teeth to clench. At the same moment joined him—likewise in search of a place to smoke-St. Clair, his neighbour, a Canadian.

"H'st," De Graffe whispered, before St. Clair could speak,

and he pointed to the gang. "Listen!"

Three of them, constituting its pluck and its brains, were clearly white and known to the two spectators as originators of all the vexatious land contests which had lately disturbed the countryside. The moon sailed clear of some cloud rack, so that all could now be distinguished, individually. main prey of this "tin-horn" gang were the non-Englishtongued Europeans, whose ignorance of the soundness of their tenure, had, heretofore, caused some of them to abandon their homesteads, overawed by threats of litigation and violence put forth by the larcenous pests.

The rest of the men composing the small mob were halfbreeds; executive tools these, who cannot conceive yet the potency of the Aryan, while emancipated from Indian law; sinning more through instinctive perversity than deliberate will. One of them was of higher gifts. He possessed the superlative cleverness of the Indian nature and was a leader thrice over among the Metis, because of physical prowess and a quantum of courage (as we estimate that quality); because of acuteness; and because of a greater knowledge gained by schooling, together with a wide acquaintance with the whites. He was all aboriginal in his build and in his swift alertness. His large eyes gleamed in the dusk with the sullen glitter of beryl stones.

"Well, I'm dam'd!" exclaimed St. Clair suppressedly:

while the still air wafted the following to the hearers:

"That St. Clair has some dandy land," quoth one of the whites, "prairie an' wood, too. We could run the smuggled stuff right up there—safe—without leavin' th' river once."

"Yes, damn him, but that's patented land," rejoined another. "He bought from Smith, y'know; an' I don't go

much on the smugglin' as a steady thing, anyhow."

"Well! There's that De Graffe. They're God-dam' monop'lists," spake the third. "Them two's got land enough for ten. Let's burn the sons o' —— out if we can't do nawthin' else."

"Easy done it. Them two's good men—t'let alone. Either one'd fight on the drop o' a hat an' spend his bottom dollar gettin' even in court, besides. Ye'see one's n'American an' th' other's a Kanuck. Same litter o' pups—when you come down to it. They're educated, know the law; an' they got grit."

odds from anybody."

The third speaker among the whites retorted, "Breed's nothin'. I'm n'American m'self. W'd clean out——"

"You bet, Bill! Metis!" exclaimed number one. "Th' Metis didn't count when the expedition got after your cur, Riel, in 'seventy. Don't you scowl at me, y' black bastard. Th're ain't enough o' yer kin round t' make you fight here—not by a mile thick. Them's your odds—an' then y' das'nt."

"Bully man, On-ta-ri-o, c'rect 's Hell!" applauded the

first.

An old man among the Bois-brulé spoke now in the interests of peace and good will. The kindly accent the highland Scot uses in speaking English sounded very quaint as it proceeded from the copper-skinned veteran who hailed from among the Scotch half-breeds of Selkirk settlement, clearly.

"Soorely poys! Soorely ye'r no goin' tae fall awt. Tak'

thought off thae wark pefore ye, laddies."

The whites, with sundry strange oaths, disclaimed any

#### CLOTILDE

pugnacious intentions, but reaffirmed their refusal to be "walked on by any sort o' black-and-tan."

Scowling at the new indignity to his clan hereat, the yet diplomatic Baptiste declared himself ready to "drop the dam'd foolishness," and expressed a desire "to get down to business"; but his peaceful words belied the clouded brow and the tense lips. They all knew what a liar he was, of course.

"Y' not ve t'ink o' hol' man H'Otto's claim. I'tink me, ve 'ave that dam' easy," interposed one of the dusky brother-hood of the French half-breed persuasion.

The suggestion took well. The others blamed themselves, frankly, for negligence. Here was a victim easy to their hands.

A shock went through Baptiste at the words. He fairly hissed, "Le' me have you girl an' an' ye fellers kin' have the rake off else!"

"That's pretty stiff, son."

"Remember ther's things th' folks an' th' law won't stand nowadays."

"Law be dam'd! I know places it'd take the law a hell of a time t' fetch yet. What do I care for ye'r law! Je suis des Metis, I say!"

There followed some demurrer to this suggestion, but the violent element predominated in the council, even to rebellion's edge. And the whites knew, when once the Indian blood got desperate in them, that the breeds were neither to hold nor to bind and they were at the mercy of these, their followers, in the event of disclosure. Nay, more; if disclosure came, not only the dreadful truth would be elicited of their deeds, but there would be added to the evidence a web of cunningest additional perjury as well. They dared be moderate in villainy no longer. There came a tightening of girths on the ponies, tethered in the scrub opposite the gate. De

Graffe gripped St. Clair's shoulder hard, saying hoarsely the while:

"Go! Tell Wilmot! Six deputies will do. You'll come?"

"I'll do it! but, where are you going?"

"Mounted! Off! I have Sultan along—can cut them out. Hurry! Damn it, hurry!"

"But "-and St. Clair tried to detain him.

"Man, she's on the way home!"

"Who? Eh—Hold up! Do! You must have a gun, Louis. Wait!—Old man—Damn it! If I had a horse he shouldn't go alone. Why they'll kill him. De Graffe sweet on the Dutch girl? Or is it?—I guess I'm not a gentleman. Sure we're bound to do that for any woman. She's fit besides. Yes, she's a beauty and really a lady. But then, De Graffe—with his air! Oh, God help her! I'll eat that Baptiste's heart if anything goes wrong to-night. What fools we were!"

St. Clair was dangerous looking then. A slight projection of the under jaw gave his fresh, blonde face an aspect of possible ferocity in its most genial moments, which expression now was pronounced. All the time he was running swiftly towards the sheriff's house. St. Clair rushed amain. The burly sheriff bounded from house to the ballroom; and, seeing his hurry, the posse he chose asked no questions until they were in the saddle.

Meanwhile De Graffe was some time on the trail, his evening attire unchanged. A mad sight, made the dress-coated, white-gloved figure, careering along on the large, fierce, black horse's back. Doubtless badger and gopher holes were miraculously missed; for he took to the grass to deaden the sound of the hoofs. For all his watch the pursuer never sighted the band, although the clang and beat of their gallop sometimes came back to him from afar. Across

the cataract of wrath, his sub-consciousness was aware of the loveliness of the night. There was a moon in heaven; but great league-wide flakes of broken cloud would trail over her, checquering the far-seen dim plain—treeless and fenceless—to the north and the west, with mottles of ivory sheen and ultra-violet shade. The atmosphere was pregnant with scents of mown grass, and of balm of Gilead and of briar from the woods to the south of the trail. The air remained absolutely windless, weighted with dew that cooled the hot face with gentle moisture. The stretch of the horse's body, and the recoil of his quarters, was swift, unflagging; as rhythmic as a machine. The pace was hasty as a speeding arrow in fact, but, in seeming, to the rider, slow, unendurably—six miles, twenty-eight minutes—a world's diameter, years in passing.

Not until he was within a mile of it did he see a light at the German's homestead. Then, through a window, came the spurt of a match, then a lamp's light,—a period of quiet ("On, good Sultan"!), then the beat of the robbers' ponies' feet ceasing; knocking—a parley—loud voices, rising always—then a crash! The charge of the pursuer's horse burst through the assailing band, but they raillied, pressing

him away.

Two of the invaders went down, almost simultaneously, as the cool madman leaped from his plunging horse—before that short ebony whipstock inlaid with heavy silver filigree—a Mexican trophy. The strokes were given down-cutting or backhand in approved broad-sword style. Instantaneously upon that the avenger clutches yet another by the throat and the weighty staff, all too vigorously wielded, crashes down; utter, savage joy informing the smiter as he hears the skull sheath crackle and splinter. Swiftness had done all so far; but now certain of the enemy had laid hold. The throng was too great for him to achieve an unhampered stroke, but anon he wrenched free. Again came the descent of the lethal stick,

in a grip turned steel by frenzy, and another coppery brave bit the dust, unsensed.

Then at a bound De Graffe gains and stands between the vacant door posts; for the door had fallen when he heard that crash. His arms free, his back safe, his countenance dannts his assailants: the lesser in heart cowering behind and pushing on the audacious leaders. There is no parley nor truce. In that lull the doorkeeper has time to think. Frantic anxiety sharpens his features. He listens, mighty intently, for the rescuing hoof strokes. He might have asked for truce, on the girl's account, but, two of the whites being down, the aboriginal element is now in the ascendant. After the leaders had taken the brunt, these have grown reckless and will at least have spoil and vengeance. The blood lust is up in the felon souls, confident in numbers. Baptiste's swarthy eyes glow anew with prognostication of victory, albeit even yet he shirks from grappling with the grim warder of the doorway.

De Graffe, as the half-breed's revolver glinted blue, had, even as he flung himself forward to wrest it away, time to blame himself for so recklessly perilling a woman's safety, in that he had not spared, at starting, the mere additional minute necessary to arm himself. Yet, never doubting of his power to win, he launched his body in that tiger spring; but the detonation rang even as he leaped. With the hearing, he felt the prick of the bullet traversing his lungs and pitched, sprawling forward—prone, shocked, impotent, though retaining consciousness. He was numbly aware of a second struggle at the door. Was it not a skirt that brushed his face? A woman who struggled to his side? As in a dream, he saw brawny Otto go down like an oak dragging the lesser forestry, melled in a knot of four antagonists.

Lo, surely the Valkyries were abroad. Brünnhilde—nay, Clotilde appears, now verily "battle's glorious maid,"

girt for the strife, the towering neck and splendid arms agleam as in the dance of a former hour, the sweeping gown kirtled like the dædal huntress. Stormy and superb!

'Twas himself had taught her to clench fist so, and to give such body-driven shoulder stroke that there bowled over one foeman from the left; while the puissant dexter met the brass of Baptiste's brow, sending him headlong. The beastly breed, supple as a wildcat, is up instanter. He feints, dodges; and now his arms are about her. But store of brawn for a dead lift lies under the lily skin. Spurned like a nursling anon, the snaky carcass of him staggered, tossed afar when the indignant Artemesian put out her might. Again his senses swam in mist, delirious, dream-disordered. The German woman—the high-built wagons—tumult of war—Roman legionaries aghast—or was it a picture seen once or here now? Hereat a brown bare foot stamped, in wrestle, all too near his face—for venomous Metis had sprung again, hampering Clotilde's wrist. The prone man, striving and heaving uselessly to rise, vomiting blood, has an inspiration born of primeval wrath. His teeth, sound and white as a young hound's tushes, with the fell abidingness of a mastiff's, close on the very tendon of Achilles.

Now he, grimly aware of coming death, forgets not his humour; appreciates, where once he felt disgust at the ungentle Lochiel's quip on a similar occasion: "Mine enemy's flesh is the sweetest bite I ever tasted." Nor less was the yell that went up from Baptiste than that sent over the trench by Pelus' swift-footed son—but in quality shrill as incarnate agony and terror.

Clatter, clatter—patter, patter rumbles the hard ground, increasing to a continuous roll. Earth shakes to a cavalry charge. The screech of the breed is overborne by bass and baritone voices. Heading the relief, furious sheriff and fierce Kanuck are upon the outlaws.

De Graffe's head clears a little. If the daughter of Woden of late were here, now, verily, righteous, ireful, vociferous, red-bearded, mauling Thor, in the person of Wilmot, heads half the gods to aid the Valkyrie. He sighs, as happily as a child snugly tucked abed and sleepy—and lapses.

The law's fierce vindicator had followed Sheridan of yore, Chief and the edge of battle recalled by the hurly-burly, his blood shook with rapture of combat. The roar of "Fighting Phil" was on his lips. Nor was St. Clair backward, nor yet the ex-partner of the telegraph operator, as they dropped

into that writhing knot about Otto.

When the barely outstripped posse came up, in five minutes more, there was little to do but "rope" six fugitives who had scattered on the arrival of the rescuers. Sorely mauled, old Otto had half-strangled twain and by the newly arrived help all four of his intimate assailants were shortly bound. The sheriff had done his devoir on two more. The last of De Graffe's victims was just getting over his stun; the penultimate one having gone to his place. The one primary felon, squirming, but well-nigh throttled, lay bencath Clotilde's knee, who, looking disdain upon the captive of her hands, blushed rarely at the congratulations withal. Ere yet that consummation arrived, easeful sleep had sealed De Graffe's sense in oblivion and held him for a mighty space thereafter.

## IV

For a month De Graffe's life was in doubt, for he had lost much blood—besides the location of the bullet was dangerous. He was scarcely able to stand when Court convened in that county; but would listen to no proposition of postponement of the trial.

Information had been laid against him by some of the

natives, relations of the half-breed—high-placed ones in that country of social anomaly, the west—so the grand jury, at the behest of the District Attorney (a staunch friend of the defendant), on his representing to that august body that this was not only their legal duty but the best thing for the accused, had brought in a "true bill." ("True bill?" quoth the foreman as he countersigned it, "then Pilate wa'nt far wrong when he put that question 'bout truth.") This action, be it said in passing, jeopardised the District Attorney's chances at the next election, but De Graffe went stumping in his interest and so saved the situation.

De Graffe's real plea was "justifiable homicide," of course. As the evidence was clear, proceedings were merely perfunctory, on the issue. The petit jury did not need that the Court charge to bring in a verdict of "not guilty." They would have done that, if necessary, in the Court's despite, without

retiring.

The doctors had predicted a quick recovery after the dividing time of doubt—following the strain of trial—was passed. Pass it did without relapse; but exertion and emotion, merely formal as the trial was, retarded convalescence, maugre the professional opinions, based upon the vitality and recuperative powers of the patient. The after recovery was slow—almost seemed to be at a standstill; receding from, rather than approaching, the point of absolute recovery.

"There's something worrying him. He has a spite at life. Doesn't care about anything," asserted one medico; and the

others finally agreed with him.

Guinevere could not have pleaded the pagan, spontaneous repulsion of perfect health, but she had the thorough, delicate, nervous horror for weakness or illness. Her own was a constitution functionally perfect, but always menacing decline, which yet could, and did, withstand uses sufficient to

## From Far Dakota and Otherwhere

overthrow others supposedly more robust; but in this instance her desire, reborn or rewakened by circumstances, which sentiment she dared to name by the more resonant word, bade her oftentimes seek the couch of the sick man, with, in his estimation, puling commiserations and offers of solace to the piece of nigh bloodless clay lying there. Her main duty in the convalescent stage consisted in bearing those gifts of edible nature in which the sick are supposed to revel. such times, the wounded man's wish to remain as complacent as in health, in order to cover his present abnormal irritability, only served to exhibit signs of agitation; which the watchful returning love thought to presage a good hope for her. Not the least of De Graffe's trials was that of commending her purchased gifts. Now Clotilde's jellies and broths were unpeered; while St. Clair and the others supplied rarebits-calves, poultry, game-to such an extent as to make life merely wearisome.

It was well into autumn when he made his first effort to go about unassisted; doing it furtively. He stood, ghostly, in the doorway his prowess had saved aforetime and was, feeling weakness come over him, staring about for his Brünnhilde, well-nigh to have been only the comforting "Valkyrie of the tomb," transmitted to an angel guardian. She was an integral part of his life now; too late, too late, he ruefully took thought. When had she other than smiled indulgent, the smile a very anodyne, at all the petulance, the irascibility, his shattering had engendered. All, all, so little acknowledged that divine healing beneficence, that tireless patience, taking rebuff cheerfully, and crabbedness thankfully. There is no use in repeating the content of his cynical spells, his analysis of woman's gentleness into instinct and hereditary training. He was sick and did not honestly believe it, even when the mood was upon him.

Guinevere rode up at an ill moment. He cared not to dis-

guise his feelings, and regarded her with the impatient look of one nerve-jarred, one who would be alone, one who loathed all things. He looked about for his gracious rusticby hereditary instinct perhaps, like any other male babv. Her grace of rusticity most urbane (he realised it for the first time) always was disappearing, on work intent, as soon as the burden of greeting this visitor was over. He cursed inly that furtive touch of a snowflake of a hand on his shoulder, comparing these sterile shows of tenderness with all the other vigils and patiences in peace, and her iron The debonair face ("the Lord is maidenhood in strife. debonair," saith the old poet), full of great quietude, suppressing sorrow for the patient's sake, had been present to him in his bitterest agony of pain or of weakness, cooling the fire of delirium, shining across bloodless, tranced total overthrow and, later, the angry pangs of recovery. memories did by no means improve his little-sweet temper. His manners were brusque, on the road to real rudeness.

The courtly dame brought the news of her release from bonds matrimonial, the lure of her beauty spells laid wide, and faint, veiled innuendos of the reward awaiting his long probation did he care to cull it. Surrender enveloped her. The tenderness, revived, she had for him, roused by freedom and memory, she could, not nor scarcely cared, to suppress. Hers only asked a look to come against his lips. blood-heat of wholeness been his perhaps she had rued her He was but a man and she had rare charms of person. Lately, also, he had begun to despise her. But now his was the phase of homesickness. He loved the womanly, the mother-soul in woman, nor admired the hetaire type. was tamed, as well. Pride and self-reliance called for a mate. Extracts and attars were discerned to be less sweet than prairie roses at sun-up.

"If you can reconcile yourself to the release, I have

nothing more to say," was all he answered to her budget of news. Then he stared gloomily past her.

Guinevere's all-expressive eyes rayed protest, but she at-

tempted no verbal defence on that particular head.

As the interview culminated, however, her suavity took on some of the ruffled aspect of majesty, when a vassal, long-suffering in loyalty, develops radical tendencies, and a too great familiarity in council. She waxed warm. He drew on his remaining forces and grew colder and more polite. Their latest exchange of words approached to a lapse of manners conventional in her case; while wrath, downright and careless, spoke plainly in his bent brows and shaken voice. She had sneered at Clotilde and lied (as he supposed) in sneering.

Now Guinevere merely intimated that Clotilde cared for him. She did not attribute selfish motives, either. Thus they parted; she to go away with a great self-pity at heart, yes, and a lessening indignation at him; for she was not of a definitely ireful temperament. As much, too, as was in her voluptuous sense and her fickle, tepid heart, she loved himand the more so for his masterful present attitude. Graffe went indoors; realising the strain that had been upon him by its effect when the interview ceased. down upon a sofa and there Clotilde, seeking to scold for disobedience of doctor's orders, found the man, restless, quivering, wan and very, very cross. He repudiated quiet and She perceived his agitation and interpreted it would talk. She answered unheedful of the bent of his words, wrongly. but her last pierced him sore.

"Going away! where to?"

"To Minn'ap'lis. Mine father fears so foolishly that there is danger for me here. I do not wish to go, for the truth I do not—"

Selfishness spoke out of him, and querulousness, the out-

come, partly, of over-indulgent nursing. "You—you will leave?—No, pardon that. It's unmanly and unthankful; presumptuous, too."

She bent over him beseechingly. "Do not speak of kindness—nor unkindly—to me." The voice was weeping faint.

"But, mine friend, soon you will be well—sh—e---

"She!-I heard that-Whom?"

"Ah, sly boots, you know well." Her attempt at roguishness was a failure, and pathetic. "She who has been so good, so kind, so unhappy, all the time of your illness."

He laughed, ruefully enough, for Clotilde was going away, her mind made up. And who could be more determined than gentle Clotilde? Faint, faint hopes, hardly vital enough to have been really cherished, were dashed.

"Why laugh so? It is terrible to hear."

"Why not?—or curse—when you believe me a fool—as I am. But not as you surmised; not that lower depth yet."

"Do you think a woman cannot see? Shame to try to

deceive your friend! I do so hope-"

"No more of that, if you are my friend! Woman see, forsooth! Not if this be a sample of the boasted intuition! You must explain."

"She was your first luff, your true luff. She does luff you

yet. I did see it and she-she told-me."

"Did she so? Oh, I have no doubt! She is fit for any effrontery. She loves herself, I guess. True love! Light love! No love! My true love died seven years ago; or was never born but in a fantastic brain. Dear, my dear, I am not fit to touch your bonny cheek, but 'tis you I love—no other—love you and know it hopeless! Take that with you wherever you go. It is not much—but my all. You do not care except to pity; and I want none of that."

He continued to gaze at her face, downcast, which when

## From Far Dakota and Otherwhere

he saw the rose and lily contend upon, his grew glad as morning.

"Surely"-hoarsely, this-"surely you cannot--!

Clotilde, do you care? ","

"Ah, 'tis you are cruel now. You are ungentle-more than I could believe."

"Never, dear, never just now! Thoughtless, impatient, I have been, but cruel never. Why should I wish to hurt you, dear? You were always gentle and shy." He took her yielding hand. "Let me live—Tell me!—Whisper then."

And sweet Clotilde whispered, and hid her face where it belonged, tearful a little and panting, nodding and cuddling to his whispered questions. At length, raising a brave regard, she said aloud, "Mein Herr, I shall be right jealous of

you-and your dreams."

"I hope so, for so I shall be sure you continue to care. But again, jealousy means agitation, for which you are too royal and loyal. You could not stoop to petty passions. As for dreams, be sure they are gone to oblivion. Sweeting, say it out loud. 'I luff you—Louis.'"

But the tender quip stung her to memory of other than

love passages.

"Oh, I have been too happy! I must—must—go away. I am not worthy. I should shame you! No, it is not your jest that hurt, but the thought it brings. I know—believe—you. But the difference comes back in those great things—so little, too. Do let me go, best one. I would not spoil your life, nor mortify your pride—I who am rustic, ignorant."

"Take my word seriously, my Clotilde. You can only spoil my life by going now. You are headstrong, blind—blind in foolish, philistine misconstructions. Believe it, I am the honoured one here. By God, you shall not go!"

He had grown bright-eyed, active and voluble—his olden self, as the passion of pleading heightened; but the reaction followed when he saw her will to persevere. Floating mists began to flit before his senses. Even his own voice rang hollow and foreign to his own ears. The laidly darkness of syncope well nigh overbore his consciousness. He sank panting and sweating back to his rest; thrusting out a hand across the darkness to clutch some stay of life in that of his beloved. The weak touch finished it. Agitation, pity, sense of his utter sincerity, of her own loving heart, swept superconscientious scruples aside; while the clinging hand, the sorrowful, faint face appealed as much as love's eloquence to the maternal in the woman.

"Louis mine, canst hear thy cruel luff"—almost wailingly. "I cannot go, cannot leave thee, if I would; for thou art stronger than I. Thou art my better me! I luff thee overmuch—am selfish—thoughtless only of thee. Thou hear'st? Will it do?"

Her words were a reviving essence. He lay and listened, gathering strength.

"Yes-no-not enough! Give me the elixir of life, so that

I can realise it all."

But he had had his first draft already, to appearance. The beat of hope, of renewed, unfevered life, blushed through the pallour. The old habitual valiance, so long foregone, relighted his eye. Nearly he was his wonted leopardian self again.

"What would'st have—thou? For I will 'thou' thee, being that you cherish our German home word better than

formal 'you.'"

"Yes, 'thou' me always, and—one more thing—that do presently. Remember you were once very angry when I would have kissed you."

"Do.I not?—and my foolishness the day before?"

"Jove! was that it? That blush might have saved me much sorrow. If I had dared believe! I, asinine, remarked

that you were a strange girl. I see it all. Clotilde, 'hereupon I will kiss thee!'"

As a bird to her mate, before he might rise, she swooped; bending above him statuesque shoulders and face, trenching his head about in her hair's golden cloud, the "heaven blue" of her eyes over against his, deeply dark as mid-ocean's azure.

"Thou shalt not need; shalt not exert thee, my sore wounded; mine ill used; my valiant heart! Rest thee; for

hereupon I kiss thee!"

"She gazed, she reddened like a rose Syne pale as ony lily,"

but kissed him bravely enough, and awkwardly; that being her first love kiss.

He says the last anguish of illness left him then, for his

heart was at peace.

"My Clotilde, you can never conceive how lovely and stately you are—in mind's and in body's beauty—in high dignity and in gentle softness. Oh! thou "eternal womanly!"

#### DALE

N 1876 the territory east of the Missouri River had fallen partly under the reign of law. The Sioux were well in hand, having learned their lesson; while the Chippewa were, as always, friendly. The white swarm now began to preëmpt the Dakota prairies. Your "old-timer" will yet speak exultantly of those days. The rush of new acquaintance, the ardour of hope, the plenty, and the pleasure, revive in their talk. Towns were few and of small population, but they did the business of cities. It was a spontaneous carnival-time, riotous and reckless, joyous and evanescent, whereof the present is, there and now, the reactionary, the penitential result, perhaps.

Howbeit, for the present purpose, Dale "struck town" during the summer of that year. He was of a tall, loose-jointed, muscular physique, with a face which he could make absolutely expressionless. His speech had the drawl of Missouri. Though reticent, he proved genial enough, as became a self-respecting frontiersman. People liked him, yet he was a suspect. Rumour began to whisper strange things of his antecedents.

And so, uncontradicted rumour, reaching soon to assertion positive, pronounced him, in the end, outlaw and fugitive. None the less, Dale left his mark. After his passing, people told things that yet go to his credit.

He worked, during the harvest, with a threshing crew, doing yeomanly work as "feeder." On a certain evening the work was protracted to an unusual hour. There remained in the end but the half of the last stack of a "setting," or cluster of stacks, to finish.

Now the owner of the machine was eager to complete this; firstly: because it threatened rain, which would injure the uncovered grain; secondly: he wished to move the traction

engine to a new "setting," against the morrow's work. But the crew were weary and famished. The owner's remonstrances got no heed; and, at length, the men began to move towards the cooking tents. Dale, though occupying the most fatiguing position, seconded the proprietor, doing it suavely enough, at first.

"Boys," quoth he, in his imperturbable drawl, "'tain't

doin' th' square thing by th' boss, nur' th' machine."

One of the "boys," theretofore the champion of the gang, remarked that the boss, and the machine, might find quarters in a locality seldom mentioned in any save a theological magazine, while himself would find rest and refreshment in the tents. Dale's patience left him then, but not a particle of his coolness. He seized the champion (who wilted in his grasp) and announced his intention of "moppin' th' arth," not only with his remains, but with those of "th' hull dam'd caboodle," on pain of "finishin' this ye'r stack righ' off'n th' handle."

Under such influence the stack was finished, the "boss" gratified, and the crew confirmed in the opinion that Dale was "a hell of a nice fellow, if you let him alone, but a mighty bad man when his back's up, gentlemen." More than one member of that crew had fought as large men as Dale, and never thought to dare; but these adversaries were not accredited with outlawry, nor Missourian birth, nor facile accuracy in shooting.

Threshing being over, Dale returned to town upon a certain election day. Two-thirds of the new settlers were foreign-born, and had but lately taken out their declaratory papers; the which conferred the power of voting in Dakota. The majority espoused the prevailing political cult. The leaders were "old-timers" versed in all the wiles and ways of frontier politics. Then and there, a man might have his own opinions and express them unchallenged—save on elec-

tion day. Then he might, as a great concession, write and vote his own ticket in silence and thankfulness. This phase is not yet entirely of the past.

At the election in point, a "tenderfoot," in his temerity, dared to beard the "bosses" and to seek to make heretics—that is to say, proselytes—political. Argument, angry remonstrance, threats, produced no effect on this little German immigrant, of Democratic proclivities, whereupon a certain stalwart—one of a twain who enter this tale later—threatened as a last resort to smite him sore; when in rushes Dale, and invites the oppressor, and his followers—whom the Missourian indignantly nominates as "currish heelers" to the combat. The chieftain is politic, though unterrified, and invites Dale to "mind his own knitting."

The war ends in words; but the German speaks, thereafter, to his partisan heart's content; while Dale, who, contrary to his wont, had been looking on the rye when it was amber, remarking that himself has "consid'rable of a jag on," retires to sleep, conscious of virtue and of offensive partisanship; leaving strict orders, meanwhile, that he be wakened should danger menace liberty of speech anew.

Dale became a bartender after that. Lee's hostelry, where he took up his abode, stood two miles north of town, where the stage route crossed the International Boundary into Manitoba.

One day Lee was struck, while reading the papers, by the account of the death of a road agent named Jim Collins. Apparently the robber had met unexpected resistance in that particular foray; for he perished valiantly fighting odds.

Said Lee upon occasion, "Dale was a stolid sort of a fellow, but it struck me then that he spoke thick when he said, 'Yes, that Jim was clear grit.' Seemed even then he spoke as if he knew the man. 'That Jim' sounded like it somehow.

I looked up when he spoke, I remember; but his back was turned so I didn't see his face. Of course I had heard talk of his being o' that sort himself; and I put his feeling down to that; after thinking things over. I didn't know I'd read him the ending of his own brother."

A restless, determined-looking stranger came to town It was noticed he immeabout the time above indicated. diately interviewed the United States Deputy Marshal and the County Sheriff. The resulting communication was as follows: The new arrival was a marshal of Texas "on the slot" of one John Collins, whom his State looked for to answer various indictments for stage and train robbery, as well as

certain resulting homicides.

The description and the accompanying photograph satisfied the local authorities that Dale was the looked-for man. As to his immediate apprehension, however, there entered two weighty deterrent considerations. Sure it was that this man would decamp, did he suspect the proximity of the Moreover, he was determinate in valour, vigilant against surprise; and on shortest notice, deadly accurate in the use of his revolver. Now the latter was the lesser consideration to men accustomed to the risking of their lives; but, the reward depended on his being brought into Court alive.

It was finally agreed upon, as the best procedure, that the Dakotan officers should make a final identification of the fugitive; and meanwhile the Texan agreed to stay retired, lest rumour carry his advent to Dale.

Two men better qualified for such a venture than marshal and sheriff it had been hard to find. Experience of peril each had had in plenteous measure-finesse, address, presence of mind, quickness of eye, strength of body each possessed as well.

They found Dale in his place, behind Lee's bar—a scar

over the eye giving the clinching clue to his identity. Whether their simultaneous presence raised his suspicion or not, he refused to be drawn forth, even by the inducement of a little game of "draw," an amusement to which he was, erstwhile, very partial; but on sundry specious pretexts kept his vantage ground, behind the counter; whence none might assail his back with impunity. Yet he chatted amicably enough while dispensing the liquors which his interlocutors continuously called for. Those drinks in quantity, be it said, were such as scarcely a prohibitionist might except to; each of the three taking a barely perceptible quantity—locally known as the "thickness of a finger nail"—at each round, shirking, often, even then, and alternating with a cigar.

Once, while the marshal held the bartender, as he surmised, in close dispute over a throw of dice, the sheriff, under pretext of obtaining a match, tried to get inside the counter and alongside Dale with intent to close with him. The latter perceived the manœuvre, and forthwith, without removing his eyes from the marshal's face, he put down his hand to the ledge in front of him, saying to the sheriff meanwhile, "Hol' on, pard. I don't want no help behind my bar. If yo' want an'thin' I'll be happy to help yo', Cha'lie; but I do' want no assistance."

The sheriff's fierce eyes doubtless glittered and he thought to rush upon the speaker—but the cool glance of his companion, who knew that himself stood aface with death in that event, brought back reason. The sheriff laughed the matter off, while brusquely condemning Dale's churlishness; whereat the latter smiled his quiet, self-contained smile, merely saying that it was his "treat, this hitch." They, at a late hour, returned as they had come; hoping against hope meanwhile that Dale would not hold suspicion of their errand, and so decamp.

The hope was realised, contrary to all expectation. Dale

next day reappeared in his place, seemingly no more restless than before.

One day of entire seclusion, however, had thoroughly wearied the Texan official; and on the day following his seclusion he went to the post office—a log building fronting on the main street and facing to the eastward. To the north of the main door was a small window. The marshal, having received his mail, sat down in the southeast corner of the room. On his right stood a doorway, at right angles to the street entrance, entering upon a dark passage. Scarcely had he begun to read, when steps echoed outside. Looking through the window he saw Dale pass. He had the necessary instant for preparation.

Dale, or more correctly Collins, entering, was met by the usual formula.

"Hold up yo' hands!"

Up they went as instinctively as if thrust out to swim; for Collins, taken absolutely by surprise, knew the futility and the danger of hesitation. He evidently recognised an old acquaintance; for the first words were to that effect.

"Hello, Bill! Well, you've got me, I reckon."

"Guess so, keep 'em up tho'!"

Collins fixed his own on the marshal's eye and a colloquy went on, for a minute perhaps; the officer's reply mostly confined to monosyllables; while the outlaw continued to stare unwinking, hoping to blur or lull the adverse watch. In the meanwhile his fingers bent and unbent, while the hands and arms, feigning fatigue, drooped at the wrist and elbow, making little hawklike clutches and swoops towards the holsters, concealed inside the vest—signs checked by the command, "Keep'em up, I tell ye'!"

Perhaps the marshal's eye wavered as he searched with his free hand for his nippers or perhaps his revolver's muzzle was deflected by the motion. At any rate, in the flashing of an eye, there came a pounce of "Dale's" taloned right hand to his left breast, whereat the marshal, being warned, fired, his bullet, as the inquest showed, scoring the outlaw's wrist; grazing the heart and so transpiercing the body in its passage. The stricken man did not fall at the shock, but stood, after the first shudder, holding his drawn revolver aimed against the door leading to the dark passage, through which the marshal had bounded upon perceiving the futility of his shot.

The postmaster, a frontiersman, who had seen shooting in his time, took in the proceedings entirely through the postal wicket, and prepared to dodge, if revolvers turned in his direction. Another spectator, not without fame as an Indian fighter, crouching, peeped from behind the large stove and gnashed his teeth while thinking of his own—now discarded—revolver.

Collins' fight was with no other than the marshal however; it is doubtful if he knew of the presence of these others. He stood rigid, unflichingly, aiming lidlessly at the closed door; twitching spasmodically at times. Vengeance, taking the form of volition, held back, defiant, the supineness of death. And his time came. The marshal growing impatient, thrust forth his head and weaponed hand, whereupon Collins' revolver spoke doom. The Texan pitched forward—dead—stricken through the brain.

"So," said Collins gaspingly, and still watched over against his enemy lying prone, lest he live yet. The postmaster here came forward, saying wrathfully, "We've had enough o' this. Get out o' here! Your man's dead, anyhow."

"All right, gov'nor," spoke Collins through his stiffening jaws, while still contemplating his work.

"Yest, I reck'n he is-dead-and so-be I."

He stepped backward haltingly towards the door, keeping

aface of his still victim. When his head touched the low door lintel the rigour passed like a flash, the tense eyes and arms relaxed and he fell to the ground amain, his feet still indoors, the face, yet frowning, staring into the clear, graygolden afternoon sky.

The town had just bought and laid out a new cemetery; so these two were the first fruits of the new city of the silent.

Correspondence with the relatives of the men showed that they had been warm friends once, the officer having been Collins' groomsman.

Thus now the erstwhile comrades—whose ways destiny had severed—their duty, their life's work, and their life's mistakes over, lie reunited again, under bond to keep the peace of mighty and merciful death.

## DESERT BORN

#### A DRAMA IN ONE ACT, WITH SOME DESCRIPTIONS

Time—September, 1903. Place—a once fashionable street in an Eastern Canadian City. The roadway occupies the front of the stage. Back of this runs the granolithic sidewalk; then boulevard, merging into a cramped lawn, extends back to the basement of a very substantial stone house of ancient type. The honse-front occupies the rear centre of the stage; a space on each side proclaims its isolation and its roomy grounds. A flight of stone steps ascending on an arch rises from the lawn to a high double-leaved front door of massive oak. Above the highly built basement the first-floor windows are all shuttered, save one nearest to the doorway. The house is in complete darkness.

The large portico has pillars of stone and is roofed, like the house, with slate. There are divans on each side, from doorway to steps. Some easy chairs stand in the curtained entry. The moon, shining in a clear sky, irradiates all it can reach. The house-front and the portico are shadowed. House and grounds are somewhat out of

repair and neglected-looking.

The door opens suddenly and Elonie emerges. She switches on the lights in the roof of the portico. She is tall and very splendidly formed. Her features are clear cut, and statuesque, dark as tropic eventide, and as sumptuous—Calvé in Messalina—She is a mistress of the art and mystery of dress. Cardinal and black are the trying dominant colours which she dominates; for her bearing is as proud as it is gracious.

She is apparently filled with tedium. She spreads her arms wearily,

then drops them languidly.

ELODIE—Why did I not go to the theatre? Why?——I wonder if he—if he—guesses. Oh, he is deep—deeper than deep waters. And yet he is not. He is clear, transparent, too. He is a man. These others are—mere fools. He is very strong. Sometimes I hate him! He is a fool, too. Is he sincere? Yes! No!—I do not know. I must know. He fences skilfully. He can feel another mind like a woman when he wishes. Other times, one might believe him stupid. He is not selfish nor stupid—nor yet holy. His family being

an official one, he is in society—and hates it. He is not "stuck up," but a gentleman—the best. These others! But he is very honourable and scrupulous—in places. [A long pause in the languorous broken monologue.] Bah! (with a passionate flash) he is a mystery. What is he to me? [A pause.] I wish I knew. Does he care? [A step sounds through the still air, coming down R. on an invisible side street. Elodie clasps her hands and stands "frozen" as a creature of the woods.] I would know that step in Paradise; have known it from girlhood. Have—I—not—dreamed about it—in the years? There is authority; a man sure of what he wants and where he is going. Ah! (mirth invades the sombre face) I must play a little. [She switches off the lights, hides behind the curtain, scarcely to be discerned from the shadows.]

[Hector comes down from R. His costume of Halifax tweed, with belted coat, close-fitting knickerbockers and puttees serves to exhibit the excellence of a robust and active physique and the proper carriage of it. He wears a soft, wide-leafed gray hat. His features predicate self-reliance.

His gait slackens. He breathes deeply and slows to a saunter, humming a chanson of which the words are more or less inaudible, save the concluding, "Dans la ville de Bytown," which is always clearly heard, though muted.]

HECTOR—H'm! Well, it doesn't matter! Good old Canada! After prairies, Rockies, South Sea Islands, Nippon, Cathay, Ind., Sahara, Andes, Yukon, smell of native, dear Autumn is good. The others are none too bad. The baking, blistering desert was nearly as good as this. Turn about that and the Manitoban winter, and this would be more perfect than Samoa, where there is no word for weather. Yukon is not bad. But this lifts the chest without exposure

## DESERT BORN

to frozen antres, and reddens the blood without strain of [He pauses, pondering.] Some desert wanderer went to my make-up in the long ago. He must have been a most prepotent ancestor. It outcrops every once and again in our breed. I am a pure atavism. The throw-back is complete. [He stares long at the darkened house, then looks at his watch. Blind as sleep, that front! Nine o' the clock were not too late to call on her. THe "checks" at the open window.] Was that a shadow—[Pause] or only the curtains moving? There is no wind, though. Pause. is the curtain. The rear windows are probably open. Empty it looks—but does not feel. I've a mind to burgle. [Pause.] I'll do it. [He runs across the boulevard and lawn, leaps like a terrier, clutches the stone sill of the open window, jams his toes into the rock-faced masonry, heaves up, reaches inward, grips the inner moulding and seats himself on the outer sill.

'Tis as well no one is about this street so deserted. I'm sorry I did it. But now that I'm here I will see. [He stares in, then drops to the ground springily.] This is presumptuous. I am making too free altogether. Was it my pulses or did I hear a gasp? Someone, not she—might have been there. It would be ghastly, that. Even were it herself, my privilege as an old friend may have lapsed in fifteen years.

I saw her in February last, on a street car. I knew her, but did not know. [Pause.] I suppose I stared as she went out. She smiled, bowed. When I next saw her—in May—we spoke. I went home with her; have called every time I was in town [Damn prospecting—here]. In the last month I've fairly haunted her—with her air so hospitable, so cordial, herself elusive as a fairy. Does it matter to her? I've made a decision as to me; can't help myself. Sometimes I would like to. It is not comfortable to feel gyves.

She is not an ideal; temperament afire; there's a history

somewhere. Her associates are a mixed lot. How she takes wholesome influence, though! She absorbs the smallest glimmer of the right thing as the air does light. She is superstitious as any fetish worshipper, yet is never afraid. Illiterate in any real sense, she speaks as we do. She gets it out of the air, I guess. She has the courage and tact of an ambassadress, yet cannot tell-well-gold from alloy. She believes that those fellows whom she told me about, that other whom I know, to be ensamples of the aristocrat. They're really bad lots, of no particular culture or rearing, certainly not gentlemen of Britain, veneered gentile-bourgeois-merely, fellows with allowances exiled out here. I make a point of introducing Headley. She does not recognise the type. The other, Hinchley, said he had the V. C. medal left with his mamma—until I took the field. He knew I'd been in the scrap—wiggled and explained—" a mistake, a German order." He is a beast! It's a bad story I heard in Dawson. Frank Gascovne believes it. His treatment of his "pards" equals his treatment of the Indian girl who showed them where to dig. They're dead and she's a whore, a drunken one at that, who tells quarter of the truth in her penitent moments, half of it in her revengeful moods, all of it never. But she tells more than he dare deny: Eloide believes in me; I believe it. "English Kanucks are the best men and the best gentlemen." That's herself in a sincere She too is desert-born and plays with degenerate tame cats unfearing, though she thinks them leopards.

Habet! She is in my blood, not all to my satisfaction. She is on my nerves—with doubts, too. A boy of thirty-

five—that's me! I will not lie to myself.

I'll have her, if she wills. She can will like a man and lure like golden Helen or Scotland's Rose Marie. It is enough. The bronco is calling a lately roped mate to come out from among the tame horses, calling to come out on the

## DESERT BORN

freer ranges, the prairie that never knew barbed-wire—fenceless from rim to rim—whose only barrier is attraction. She will feel that call! [A voice bubbling with laughter chimes out. The slats of the Venetian blinds rattle at one of the closed windows. In speech the voice has a far-away suggestion of accent.]

Voice—Oh! Good-evening.

HECTOR-Wretch! you were there!

Voice—Be'ind a chair, dare devil.

HECTOR—You are not timid; so I do not apologise. But I surrender. Judge me. I salute and find doom good. [He salutes.]

VOICE—Go out into the moonshine and do it again. [Elodie's shape appears darkly at the open window. Hector does as directed; then stares into the shades.]

ELODIE—It is better than life—this. It is a street of

the stage.

HECTOR—Better than an autumn evening's dream. It is fairyland and I making the essential ass of it. But I feel like it. I like it! You understand.

ELODIE—Surely.

HECTOR—The night and we are alone. We are romance. Witness my heart and the night of your eyes.

ELODIE—You are splendid!

HECTOR—Faustina spares, commends?

ELODIE—That is not my name. Who is the lady? If it was?—This is idle. The costume is most becoming.

HECTOR—That I might see yours!

ELODIE—You shall. You deserve it.

HECTOR—Most men feel the effect of a costumed woman as their dogs do a caress—glad but unknowing—I am of those who comprehend—Let me see at once.

ELODIE—I am not ready. I want more of romance.

HECTOR-I would show it to you proper, if this were

velvet and silk. [He indicates his costume with a sweep.] These [Pointing to his shoes] sown with seed pearls. This [Indicating a cane which he carries betwixt the mid-fingers of his left hand, which is clenched and rests upon his hip] a rapier.

ELODIE—Never mind! Imagine it! You are fit in all other ways. Since ever I 'ave known you, you 'ave looked—drilled. It is not the word. You are militair. It is not the word; for you 'ave no strut, what d'they call swagger. Non! It is le bel air I mean. [Hector bows ceremoniously and with much grace. She claps her hands in a fashion which is clearly personal and characteristic.] Mon Dieu! You make un chevalier, le chevalier seul.

HECTOR—[With a sweeping obeisance.] Down to the

ground!

ELODIE—Come up! [She closes the window. Lights glow through the muffling curtains and in the hall. An inner lobby door opens—then closes. The outer door opens—then closes. Hector has ascended and is waiting. Elodie comes out. She touches a switch. A cluster of incandescents floods the lobby with light. Hector's resolute lips part and all his face and attitude are changed. He even breathes quickly.]

HECTOR—Splendour of God! [As if he were a somnam-

bulist.]

ELODIE—Sacrilege! Mais Mercie!

HECTOR—[Recovering.] You are surer than you used to be.

ELODIE—What is it about years and discretion?

HECTOR—That does not apply. Substitute, "increasing subtlety." It is not d'the word. [Smiling.] I have it—power!

ELODIE—Down to the ground! [With a sweeping courtesy which produces a corresponding genuflection.]

#### DESERT BORN

HECTOR—It is a stage—no, a court—a functioned court. I simply have to pose the musketeer when one of their queens reincarnate—The Gallant is the proper thing here and now.

ELODIE—[Having seated herself in one of the easy chairs and he on a divan near her.] You are scarcely changed at all. [She switches the lights off.] You were always so

gallant, in a quiet, stern way. You are a boy yet.

HECTOR—Until ninety! Once man forgoes the joy o' life, the bliss of mere being—he is well on to being dead—to being really old, that is. But the years! The years have brought to a superbly handsome, but unformed, girl of sixteen accomplished carriage, grace, dignity—to me stamps and sealings of time merely.

ELODIE—Never! Your face is not changed a bit. You

were always determined-looking, and you always had air.

HECTOR—Most people do not think so. I like your saying it, though. You can see, even if your partiality exaggerates. At any rate you recognised me that day in February last.

ELODIE—Why did you not speak?

HECTOR—Were fifteen years yesterday that I should presume on a resemblance and the possible mistake of a lady?

ELODIE—But you knew me, just as I knew you. We do not forget the friends of the growing days—you and I. You never called.

HECTOR-I did not know where.

ELODIE-Was there no directory?

HECTOR—I did not expect to find Elodie St. Louis. It seemed impossible. You were not of the type of those who keep their maiden names. How comes it?

ÊLODIE—You thought—

HECTOR—Madame whom? [A pause.] That cloak, circular—what do you call it anyhow?—helped.

ELODIE—[Gazes at him, then, with her characteristic of the smitten palms, laughs.] I have been told so before! I wonder if that is stupid directness or cold-blooded audacity. You are not simple, you know.

HECTOR—I am not only simple, but a simpleton. To return! I could not easily forget, while I am I, notes in secret

places-roses-moonlight.

ELODIE—Why should I? Do you remember the moon of a night just like this, and a canoe and a wild Kanuck girl?

HECTOR—Do I remember an hour in Arcady?

ELODIE—W'ere is Arcady? How can you, though?

HECTOR-How can you remember? Why not I then?

ELODIE—Well! You are not a woman.

HECTOR—You are—but, had my surmise been correct, when I met you in February last, you—woman—would not have recognised me; for you would then have been bondwoman to man, your memories of youth's romance obliterated by the demands men-children make.

ELODIE—Do not be too sure of that. I doubt they remember sometimes—and regret. [She pauses.] Come, tell

me of the canoe on the lake—ages and ages ago.

HECTOR—First, there are to be no evasions to-night, no woman-craft. [He bends towards her unsmilingly, but with kind eyes. She gazes at him, at first absorbedly and languorously. Her expression of abstraction gradually passes. Her mouth sweetens and her eyes begin to dance. She leans very close and touches, slightly clutches, his sleeve, about the wrist. It is partly a caress, partly a reproving pat.]

HECTOR—How I remember that, too! It is ELODIE.

ELODIE—I did not know. But the story—

HECTOR—In the midst then; when the lily pad did not come, because you bungled the pluck at it—

ELODIE—Your fault! you never showed me how!

### DESERT BORN

HECTOR-I did.

ELODIE—Not properly; for you only plucked several in passing, and *threw* them over to me, calling out mere—directions.

HECTOR—[Laughingly.] The motion was checked, for you held tight; the bow swung over, the gunwale dipped.

ELODIE—And you threw yourself far over and saved a capsize, and I—I let go my hold of that lily stem.

HECTOR—But you kept the grip on your nerve.

ELODIE—Do you think I did? Truly?

HECTOR—Assuredly! Else we were among the weeds—no swimming there! To face facts, I was so busy looking after my own grip on my own nerve that I could only envy you.

ELODIE—Quite so. That is why, after saving the situation, you beached the canoe and emptied it. That is what made you say such nice things to me when I shivered betwixt my fear of you and my fear of the death you had dashed aside; what made you heap all the cushions under and about me and forced me to wear your coat.

HECTOR—What else could a fellow do? It was my fault, to begin with. You were splashed, too, and your dress was thin.—I remember the snow-drift white abundance of it.—The warm day had ended in a coolish night. [Laughing.] You were a reckless handful in those days.

ELODIE—[Looking deeply into his eyes.] What taught

you how to comfort me?—for you knew the way.

HECTOR—Did it comfort you? You were almost a child and I knew that what consolation a child—I mean, I could not help it. [Hoarsely—abstractedly.] "The long, long kiss, the kiss of youth and love."

ELODIE—One, a comforter! You taught me then what "gentleman" means. I have never forgotten.

HECTOR—" Gentleman" is sometimes a synonym for a prig

who balks nature, to the betterment of none, and to his own irrevocable loss, of a time worth bearing to the grave in memory—and retrospection!

ELODIE-No!-Perhaps! I---

HECTOR—There was another time. Do you remember that last walk we had, on the evening of the day before I should strike west, in the dark and rain of a dreary deserted street—in the earthly paradise?—You touched me as you did just now.

ELODIE—And clung—a little—to my friend my gentil-homme.

HECTOR—" Take me," you said. [Whispering.]

ELODIE—[Whispering.] Why did you not?

HECTOR—Why did I not? Why? Why? I wanted to, but, like a fool and a boy, I was madder in love, in lust, with untrammelled days, than with woman, the civiliser. I wished to be untied, irresponsible.

ELODIE—Gentleman again—not irresponsible. HECTOR—A fool always, a mime, a mummer.

ELODIE—[Recovering—lightly.] And there were other girls.

HECTOR—Perhaps! Motives are mixed things. No man

knows his entirely.

ELODIE—You have only hinted at all the things, places, you have known or seen. You "do not advertise" your adventures. Where all have you gone? Tell me!

HECTOR—I have been going up and down and around the earth! I find that I, unconsciously, had a purpose. I was looking about, though I did not know it, for a place really to live in—to be—to develop all of me. Do you understand?

ELODIE—You often lost your heart?

HECTOR—Oh, it came back, like any other ranging hound, when it had run its game down, or grown weary.

ELODIE—Yes; that is a trick of hearts.

### DESERT BORN

HECTOR-You know it, too.

ELODIE—You are very rude.—Is this your sincerity? You demanded mine?

HECTOR-I'm not-and it is.

ELODIE—But did you often lose your heart?

HECTOR—It came back just as often! It is here, uninjured, intact. About your legions? [Smiling.] How the fellows in our office used to plague the heart of your first [Good old Terry!] with jealousy! You liked him best of all. I know it.

ELODIE—Is that why——? I did like him, love him. I nearly made a runaway marriage with him once. Now—I think we were a pair of silly children, and I, one with the worst of taste. Speak the truth now! Cannot a woman be in love with more than one man at the same time—when one is a girl?

HECTOR—Change the sex of the question and I'll tell you

the impulse of a boy.

ELODIE—[Pensive and mocking.] That time is gone by.

I am an old maid, for I am as old as you.

HECTOR—Not by a century—by a twentieth of it at least. Let the young folks wonder at it, in their unideaed billing and cooing—yes, stupid, animal, unreasoning passion. Young people! A woman is not in her plenitude of charm or physique until she passes thirty.

ELODIE—It is flattery, but I like it. Remember our agree-

ment. I find it hard to live up to it, for I am a woman.

HECTOR—Never! I am living up to it. It is neither flattery nor yet mere personal opinion. It is a provable—a proved—scientific fact.

ELODIE—Away!

HECTOR—Well, then, tell me about your "transactions in hearts."

ELODIE—There have been a few. [A long pause—HECTOR

watches her half-averted face. In the end she looks at him.]
There is one now.

HECTOR—[He stares outward. She in turn watches his face. The heads are not far apart.] Ah! [A pause.] I am always late.

ELODIE—If you meant it!

HECTOR—I think I meant it always. Now it is—— Who is he?

ELODIE—[After some hesitation—her agitation not wholly controlled.] Mr. Hinchley.

HECTOR—[Aside.] The awful beast—He—the satyr!

ELODIE—[Imperiously.] I am waiting.

HECTOR—[Turning to her.] You will get no congratulations.

[They stare controlledly now at each other—angrily at first. She breaks the pause, suddenly in the end—speaking brokenly.]

ELODIE—You say things no one else does to me——

HECTOR—Or dares to, my lioness. The tame cats have to sit up—waiting the time to snarl—when your bonds find you. Why do you not resent my attitude, my words? Have you grown tame?

ELODIE—[Moans, weeps just a little. With a look.] Oh, be kind to me. I cannot bear it! [Hector's face softens—He strokes her hair.]—Not tamed, not tamed. I forgive you that. But you do not care. And you take advantage of your courage.

HECTOR—[Contritely as to face, which his sympathetic voice confirms.] I am a bully! but you well know I cannot bear to see your rare tears.

[There ensues a prolonged pause. She has recovered her poise. She sits with bent head staring at the point of one of her own shoes. He has stood up and remains so, looking at her gently.]

### DESERT BORN

ELODIE—You can be as kind as cruel. I must have your good opinion—will take your—your—pity—yes, pity, even. I mind you! It is I who speak. Moi!

HECTOR—It is bravely said and I know you. It is sincerity we are hunting. It is to be soul to soul? Look you! You and I know what passion is—none better.

ELODIE—Passion?

HECTOR—That heaves us, helpless, as the wind the seas.

ELODIE—Ah, how well you understand!

HECTOR-Elodie!

ELODIE—Hector! Hector! Mon Dieu!—Tu est Mon Dieu!

HECTOR—[Very flushed and imperial.] Why this curthen?

ELODIE—I have always lived cramped. I must have place—wealth.

HECTOR—[Momently taken aback.] "In silk attire?" No! Power—that is your desire—scope!

ELODIE—You have said the word I could not find—power—scope.

HECTOR-[He ponders.] You must come with me.

ELODIE-Where? How?

HECTOR—I mean to save you from vulgarity, at least—from a beast, a loathly beast at worst. Will you queen it over a gentle people of the Pacific, a turbulent of the Sahara, a treacherous of the Andes? Would you be of the great plains, a miner of the North? You are as barbarian as I am. These places have places waiting for us! "Two wishes make a will," a big fellow has said. Two wills make the destiny of a community—say I, who do not write, but do things. I am not boasting! I have matched men the world over—and nature! I am fit to win, alone, the place I choose. I have not cared to choose before. To be and to see was enough. With you "my comrade and perfect equal"

achievement were questionless. Your help would count like that of Athene. I will neither bind nor be bound. I will be true as yourself. I am chucking some traditions, too. Come!

ELODIE—As I am?

HECTOR-As you are.

ELODIE—I will follow you. I also can be true. [Short pause.] I do not care; I will follow you.

HECTOR-Care?

ELODIE—You will tire.

HECTOR—Tire of infinite variety, of force, of judgment thereto?

ELODIE—You do not say all. You shall know—

HECTOR—I know all! It is the last word in our lives on that head. I believe in you. You are you!

ELODIE—I fear, though you call me fearless; but I will follow you. Lead me to perdition if you will.

HECTOR—To truth and realisation rather, Elodie.

ELODIE-My-my Hector!

[They kiss passionately, then go out.]

[CURTAIN.]

## "TIMES AIN'T NOW WHAT THEY USED TO BE"

IMES ain't now what they used to be when gold was flush and the boys was frisky."

That, I gather from converse with "old-timers," is the thought, formulated or unformulated, of every man who lived on the frontier while such a blessed place existed outside the covers of a book.

In the seventies Law had forded the Red River of the North, and had succeeded in establishing a camp on its western shore. This primal conventionality was tolerated by the "boys" seeing that a pressing necessity existed for taking order among the new draft; but, as they were not otherwise given up to convention, the decorum of the first courts was much modified by local custom. A historian of the Saxons of the ninth century, looking in upon a session at Cranberry in the nineteenth cycle, might more clearly have realised, to the vast improvement of his narrative, more of the aspect of a stormy hundred-court than had he studied contemporary proceedings in a Boston court house.

Not but that essentials, practice, procedure and rules of evidence were well observed. Albeit the place was new, there was ability enough and to spare on bench, at bar, in jury box even. But (believe it, O seldom-smiling Themis!) more freedom and humour were displayed than might have pleased older and more staid settlements. I do not believe that Justice suffered in the upshot.

The juries then had a way of their own. They repudiated the dogma of an infallible judiciary—the fear of an appeal never having been before their eyes—and they criticised the Law as delivered by the court; nay, they even amended it, did they regard that as necessary. Contrawise, the court soon got over its traditional diffidence regarding the facts

and would speak vehement words to jurors who brought in a verdict plainly contrary to evidence. After adjournment a juror might talk to the judge as though he were that official's grandfather, of course; so that evened things up all round.

The years rolled over and about the time the boundary survey was in progress the president appointed a new judge in "1st. Jud. Dis. D. T." They who had theretofore known said he was a "buzz-saw on the fly"; and when he came the

report approved itself.

There were very few white men settled in the Territory as yet. Much challenging took place at trials and as everybody knew everybody's record, prejudice was frequent; as well as a desire on the part of some citizens to avoid service altogether. One did not know when one's own time to defend might arrive. Consequently, to save the trouble of a special venire, or the calling of talesmen, the clerk and the sheriff usually subpœnaed the entire white and "black-and-tan" adult male population of Cranberry County; there being no other denizens in that end of the Territory save Indians and "breeds" living with the tribes. And these latter-mentioned folk did not pass—as a rule.

The system had its drawbacks, as the panel thus included litigants, witnesses, men under indictment, even lawyers and

court officers; when a long term was anticipated.

The new judge was not a "tenderfoot" entirely. He came from Wisconsin; which State in the eyes of Dakotans was not yet cast out of the true pale, having, they affirmed, some saving remnant of frontier ways left in it. Anyhow, 'twas better than stagnatingly civilised "N' York" or effete Massachusetts, "if carpetbaggers must come to rule freedmen."

The opening of court constituted a gala day always. In older communities to the eastward the judge arrives and takes his place like any other workingman, without visible disturbance to the everyday round of affairs; business rushing

along oblivious of the presence. On the frontiers they reverted to the customs of other days, involuntarily of course and spontaneously. A century ago, in the motherland, if there were a garrison about, a guard turned out to reinforce the sheriff and bar in escort. The commons ceased work to take in the pageant and to make holiday. At Cranberry the function revived; but informally, as it were. Sans ceremonie, the officers at the Fort, the sheriff, court officers, and lawyers rode out to meet the stage. The returning cavalcade met the lesser citizens at the point where the town gates would have stood, had the place been mediæval. The judge shook hands with the dignitaries, hailing such others as he knew personally by their nighest name, meanwhile. Then they all returned to their hostelries and irrigated.

This new judge proved genial enough; but at his first visit, having few acquaintances, he appeared stiff. He had a reformatory mission on his conscience, as well as a big calendar. The buzz-saw began to whiz forthwith. The practice, therefore, had been to call the calendar on the first afternoon, then to "lay off and have a good time" for the balance of the day. Perhaps the court got a hint, or else his intuition was strong, that a juror's brains were a little caked or so upon the morning following the convening of court; for at his first session he not only called the roll, and instructed the grand jury, but impanelled a petit jury, as well, for the immediate trial of a case; only to discover that, by reason of high pressure and consequent over-speed he had run against a snag.

It finally appeared that there was a series of snags. Seemingly, someone had maliciously and with malice afore-thought been driving whole rows of piles in the river bed of justice, with intent apparently to damming it ultimately. When the examination of the panel began the first man

developed into an Indian.

This was a nephew of Big Cloud the Chippewa chief, newly returned from the Jesuit Schools in Minnesota. You could not have told him from a white man except that he was better informed than the average local Aryan, spoke better English, and stood head and shoulders taller, brainier, and handsomer than the other talesmen. As for his complexion, the sheriff, seeing him drinking at a bar, had mistaken him for an intelligent half-breed. He was ordered to step aside; which he did, looking very sullen; for he was ambitious. He departed to threaten the bartender with exposure; but John straightened that up by giving him two quarts of alcohol. Then the young man went home rejoicing; and the teepees rang to the booming of his gong and his screeching, yelping "Hi! Yaw!" all the next night.

Anon it turned out that a "breed" of the tribes, two Germans, and three Norwegians could not understand English, albeit they had taken out their declaratory papers. Down went they. Then four parties to cases, together with some witnesses, were purged out. The judge gloomed, the clerk looked meek, and the sheriff, going out, swore

bitterly.

Thereafter, the jury purged and, a case proceeding, quoth the examining lawyer, "Your name, please?"

"Travis," answered the juror, stroking a blonde mous-

tache, to cover a little bland smile, mayhap.

The counsellor did not know this man, who was tall, broad, straight, immaculately dressed and shaven.

"Your occupation," he said, after a pause.

"Ah—er—soldier," with the accent, unmistakably, of a cultivated Englishman.

By the Court, who knew a gentleman, "Rank, sir?"

"Major in His Majesty's —th Engineers." The counsellor wilted and was dumb.

"And you, sir?" proceeded the Court in ire, addressing

the Major's neighbour, also of a somewhat military cast-of

a touchy temperament as well-by the look of him.

"Your Lordship, I am Lieutenant Colonel Tree of the Canadian Active Militia. I am further in charge of the Canadian Surveying parties now employed on the International Boundary. I should be glad to know the meaning of this outrage. I have been given to believe that your customs in this part of the States are barbarous. Heretofore I doubted; now experience forces me to believe the tale. This proceeding, though perhaps meant as a practical joke, may turn out a serious international complication; seeing that my friend Lord Travis, our commissioner, to say nothing of my humble self, are forcibly detained—kidnapped might be a better word—not by ruffians, but by your officers and by virtue of your process——"

"Enough, Colonel! The Court is in session—By my process you say?—Rather by——" Here he put the brake on. "Well, in a sense, it is; but most indirectly, I do assure you. Under the circumstances it is the Court's duty to apologise. I can say no more. Gentlemen, you are free to go.—Stay!

Sheriff! Sheriff!! Call him, bailiff!"

The sheriff came, glaring defiance at the Court and vengeance at the surveyors.

"After this case is over you will adjourn Court until 8 A. M. to-morrow.—Major! Colonel!—a word with you."

He sent a bailiff to certain United States Army Officers who happened to be at the end of the hall. These followed the trio into the retiring room. The sheriff laughed and did likewise. His apology was so ample and so excellent that the angry Colonel soon became friendly.

"Well, you see," Lord Travis was saying, "our party has never been hereabouts before; camp being beyond Turtle Mountain. We had some spare days and wanted to see Cranberry and the er—excuse me, sheriff—ratives. Do you

know—the west is worse oppressed than Russia, judge? One does not dare do or say, to ask or answer for fear of a joke. It's a nuisance! I've been victimised a thousand times; for I am a perfect gudgeon—pardon—sucker—to bite. Always hoped to get even though. We were er—well—belated overnight. I surmised when the sheriff served us with process that he suspected us of smuggling; undeceived upon looking over the paper, I concluded he had a joke to spring. So then we were from St. Paul on a shooting excursion—thought he might conclude our eye teeth were cut, you know. 'Twas precious hard to get Tree to acquiesce, especially as I did not fully explain my strategy. I thought he might spring it prematurely. He wanted to wire our minister at Washington,—after that—to clear out at night—Shake sheriff.'

"I'll never call an Englishman green again, major," said that functionary, "though you're the first I ever met that wasn't. Kanucks are cute enough; can go us one better sometimes. Aren't you ashamed, Colonel? Why didn't you hold your Colonial blasted end up? This continent's dis-

graced."

"Shake, sheriff!" exclaimed the mollified Colonel, laughing till the tears came.

Then all the military men went to the Fort; the judge and sheriff promising to join them at dinner and the post-prandial

game of "draw."

The fun had dissolved the ill-humour of all save the judge. His was merely bottled and the cork popped as soon as the others were gone, fizzing over clerk and sheriff. And, aye, the storm grew loud apace! Profane adjectives and verbs hurtled. The sheriff was the best "knocker" in the place—whence his office partly. He resolved to thump the judge when he caught him out.

The clerk was a god in a machine. He allayed the storm with "winged words, soft as snow-flakes." People called him

the "golden-tongue" and he was (rare in the then Dakota) a pillar in the Methodist Church. So an orator and a theologian you may call him Chrysostom. But he was a machine politician as well. He never lost his place or raised his voice in that hurly-burly; so reason gained sway over passion in the end. He explained the paucity of juristic material, the customs of the country, the stubbornness of the denizens against innovation in that respect. He was deadly politic, saying naught about the hurt a violent reform might, could, or would do himself at elections. True the judge was a federal appointee and he the judge's; but the Registry of Deeds began to pay better than his present holding, and he meant to try for the nomination at the approaching convention. The sheriff was sure to govern there like a natural law: having the hearts of the people to a unit. He (the sheriff) was mortally sure of reelection as long as he lived and was furthermore touchy on any doubt, expressed or implied, as to his dictatorship in local politics. Diplomacy with an alloy of "guff" served the clerk well in his capacity of peacemaker—the humour of the two belligerents being a further factor.

The sheriff knew the law and his duty as well as any officer alive, but he better knew the unwritten law of the place, "common" in the olden sense, "custom to the which the memory of living man runneth not to the contrary" or something like that. He explained this to the appeased Court, appealing for corroboration to the clerk, and getting it. But, he proceeded to say, himself was there to be instructed. It was for the Court in its wisdom to institute new things—which in the abstract he admitted might be more formally legal—but for himself to institute were ultra vires. Nevertheless, he should enforce the rulings, even though the people rise and mutiny. All then was amity; but suddenly the judge's jaw dropped.

"Great Cæsar! The Grand Jury! I'd forgotten! We'll have to purge them, too. Summon them, sheriff!"

"Oh, they've adjourned long ago."

"Upon my soul their sense of public duty is high. What

have they done? Any bills?"

"No, there's a row over organisation, a fight about the clerkship. Some want Bob Blank because he's the only one that writes copperplate and they think that'll strike you. T'others want Louis Leys, but he's not on deck; won't have it."

The judge groaned. "Bring them here at once."

The sheriff departed, grimly set on keeping his word as to the new order of things. He had a couple of scrapping matches before he gathered the dispersed; for his information anent the new procedure almost caused an insurrection, as in the event of haste it cut away three dollars per day for every day of session from half the white population, to say nothing of immemorial rights violated.

The Court gave them a jobation, pointing out that these dilatory proceedings on the jurors' part meant vast unnecessary expenses to the county. They in turn thought of applying for a writ de lunatico inquirendo, for the Court to

examine into its own sanity.

Prior to his lecture, the judge had enquired into the eligibility of each grand juror. The panel fortunately was composed of English-speaking folk, Americans and naturalised Canadians. The sheriff had been cautious herein. Besides, Captain Court was foreman and he knew a thing or two about eligibility; having undergone that phase of approaching civilisation in California in the glorious era, '49 to '59. Who was Captain Court, say you? He was invariably a member of each and every grand jury—for the rest I'll tell you—"Yea," quoth the Earl, "but not to-day."

In the good old days there was neither a court house in the

county nor a surplus in the treasury; in fact there was a deficit; warrants selling at thirty-three and one-third per cent discount. Court sat in the public hall. That's the place where the shows at other times hung out. They call them opera houses now; though 'tis often the same building. The bench was on the stage. The dressing room—about eight by ten in square dimension and perched on the roof of an annex, formed the retiring room. The jury rooms were in a vacant, or rather half-finished, building across the block; that is, you went out of the back door of the hall, crossed the yards and entered the new house by its back door. No, there were no "blind pigs" then. They stared fearless and licensed on the main street. There were no hypocrites either, as yet.

The new dynasty was established; the judge supplying the intellectual, the clerk the pseudo-moral or diplomatic, the sheriff the (latent) physical force necessary to peaceful revolution. Freedom of speech left unimpaired, the jury took it out in growls—leading to submission. Novelty is grateful to the sons of men. From fearfully hating, they began to cherish and take pride in the unbending Mr. Justice.

Court had sat a week and sawed great quantities of wood. The jurors began to be actually overworked, whereat they kicked in earnest, and when a Westerner is in earnest he is in earnest, with a great big "E" modified by a single damn, mark you—if, then, he utter anything stronger, look out for a dynamic joke. The grand jury were in line with the judge. They were patres conscripti, and respectable citizens (i.e., none of them smuggled—more than a quart of whiskey at a time—nor sold liquor to the Indians).

The purged petit jury convicted all offenders until it came to Wedwood. "He might be guilty" (by the jury), "but then he was a fellow no one could help liking." The line had

to be drawn somewhere. The jury stayed out twelve hours. The Court had need of them for other cases. "The defendant was clearly guilty" (by the Court), "yet they came not out." Judging by the absence of noise there was no contention going on in there. Truth is, they resolved to acquit the accused "on general principles, because he was a decent sort of cuss." Yet, remembering the disposal of other cases similar in evidence, they had grace enough to fear the frown of the Court. They had been permitted to dine at the hotel in charge of a bailiff. At 8 p. m., growing ravenous again, they sent to inform the Court that they did not agree as yet, but did possess human stomachs withal.

"Very well," spake the judge. "Send them bread and

water, lots of both."

The sheriff leaned over and whispered.

"They say they've got to have something to drink."

"Well, is not the water good hereabout?"

"But they're dry."

"You have my instructions."

The sheriff took the message to the jury's bailiff. Shortly a sound of roaring and gnashing drifted across the yard, like unto the noises of a menagerie just before feeding time. It was muffled by distance and intervening walls, but quite audible in the still room, where a dull equity case was in progress.

The sheriff came back and the low colloquy began again.

"If they can't have whiskey they're willing to compromise on beer."

"I'll commit every mother's son of them for a month, if I hear another word of it. Let them do their duty. It's easy enough to say 'guilty' or not. They may get drunk as Billy B. Damned, afterwards."

Again the sheriff went forth. It was growing dusk outside. He never wavered in his resolve to uphold the judge;

but he knew that a crisis was at hand for all parties. He delivered his message.

"Then it's 'not guilty'" called a juror, to him standing in the passage. The dark eye gleamed triumph. The sheriff

had that jury.

"That's irregular! The verdict should be rendered only in and to the Court. Boys! Go back and reconsider or I'll report this—Let's see—I'll try what I can do. Go back—

a while, anyhow."

He strode over to his own saloon, brought out a three-gallon beer keg—or keg of beer—carried it across lots, set it down under the jurors' window, sat down upon it, watched—pondered, arose—went away and returned; this time with a lariat; which he delivered to the bailiff in charge, saying, "Throw that into the room in there. Jim Blake sleeps there. It's his. Tell them there's someone underneath the window." The bailiff knocked; delivered rope and message. One window of that little upper room was cautiously raised. Then was heard the puzzled murmurs of a dozen men who peered through the darkness. Suddenly a cry went up. "Yes, there he is! Bailiff, arrest that eavesdropper. Tie him up. Take this rope."

Within a quarter hour the jury brought in a verdict of "Guilty." The next panel found an empty keg in that room; and complained about it bitterly. The Court at first doubted their finding of emptiness, but the deprived look of the later jury convinced him easily, the more as he remembered the jollity of the preceding one. Now jurors look, in delivering a verdict, as solemn as if at their blood-brother's funeral; at least they are expected to do so. It's considered the proper way to look. The men composing the former jury

had not worn that approved expression.

The same dozen of kickers who tried the facts in Wedwood's were drawn shortly on a civil case. They had a

genuine difference of opinion on the merits. They kept coming in for instructions and information; making the steuographer's life bleak and miserable. The judge, knowing them to himself alone as "that beer-keg crowd," imputed their ardour to buncombe; so did the sheriff. When their twelve hours were up he scarcely needed orders to supply their bread and water ration. They now scouted these tenfold, as "they had the sheriff where the hair's short."

So they thought and said-even said.

"You fellows think you're smart. I'll go you one better. If I hear another whimper out of you I'll give the snap straight away to the boss. I can stand it as well as the best of you; and ye all know it. What can you prove against me, anyhow? Keg and rope, eh? Do'n know anything about 'em. Shouldn't wonder, though, as I happen to know there was a man beneath the window about that time. I guess you know who he was. Do your talking quick or by the livin' eternal I'm off to the judge with my report!"

These men were not without judgment, so they begged off. Some ate bread—some even drank the unqualified lymph, but the pitchers did not need replenishment withal. The factional fight was suspended in order to plot against the Court's

peace of mind. At last they "could not agree."

"Where is the difficulty, gentlemen?" asked the judge upon their introduction. They explained; which involved more legal charges, more reference to the weary stenographer.

"There, gentlemen, I think you have all the facts as adduced. You alone are to judge of these. You have also my latest instructions. You are rational men all; the law at least presumes so. There appears to me no reason—now that your latest doubts are removed—why you should not arrive at supper—that is, a verdict. I am acting within my powers in sending you to reconsider. Reason—calm, cool, dispassionate reason—will, I feel assured, elucidate the

# "TIMES AIN'T NOW WHAT THEY USED TO BE"

matter. Let this reflection and a sense of your high duties be your guide."

As they went crestfallen, he muttered sotto-voce: "I'll keep you there till you rot; though I wrest all the law from Glanville to Marshall."

The sheriff guessed at the resolve.

"A moment, gentlemen," continued the judge to the retiring jury. "Bailiff, it is rumoured that intoxicating liquor was conveyed to a jury during this term. This must never occur. It is flatly against all law and lays the offenders open to punishment for contempt, a punishment I should not be slow to inflict. Gentlemen, and you, Mr. Bailiff, I feel myself authorised to speak thus in the present instance; as this jury had made requisition for such stimulants. It is totally out of the question; so, Mr. Bailiff, I authorise you to exercise any force in resisting a violation of these my instructions."

"Does your honour mean that I may use a lethal

weapon?"

"Should you think it necessary I authorise you so to do, bearing in your memory, however, the responsibility incurred by an unwarrantable use of such." The judge had

a very pretty gift of irony and sarcasm withal.

That "lethal weapon" exposed the Viking's culture to the judge. Heretofore he had thought the bailiff heavy; opining that steadfast look presaged ignorance or stupidity. Those who knew understood it for depths of humour. The judge's subsequent investigations disclosed a remarkable history in the subject. Linguist, scholar, orator of approved potency, hermit by choice for three-quarters of the year, no less the man of affairs therefor. "Thighed and shouldered like the billows, footed like the stealing foam,

bathed in clouds of golden hair "—and likewise beard, with the front of Harold Fairhair, such is the Viking yet; though silver begins to invade the gold. Valorous as Lion Heart, gentle as Francis of Assisi, yet he lives a man of men. He has been and is one of nature's born arbiters. Of old Chippewa, Sioux, Bois-brulé accepted, to-day Kanucks, Yankees, Virginians, Scandinavians, Germans, French, Hungarians—even Mennonites, his immediate neighbours—recognise him as such. He has no ambitions, no spites.

He asked a deputy sheriff to bring his shotgun to the jury room; giving some other instructions beyond ear-shot of the Court. The deputy, an old crony, brought the gun there. Now the Viking, having been of old a hunter and a fighter, was as careful as a veteran soldier to keep his arms in order. It pleased one's very soul to look upon that speckless piece, perfect to the newly-placed caps (it was a muzzle-

loader), with stoppers in place too.

The bailiff seated himself before the closed door, placing the gun in a corner opposite his chair. It was wonderfully quiet, he remarked, among that jury; the hum, arising to shouts that denote a contention, being absent. Fitfully an indistinguishable spurt of conversation would rise and die, apparently between two or three of the jurors only. The Viking, after an hour had passed, could have sworn that at least nine of them were sound asleep. He knew the nose register of all, having been in camp with every man of them in his time. Clearly that crowd had come to an agreement—of a sort. In this way three hours crawled over. The watcher's own eyes were waxing heavy. At once a juror emerged.

"Verdict?" spake the Viking thickly.

"Ne'ry verdict—I want"—the man began to sniff inquiringly; and at length said, "Give us a nip o' that or else I'll give you away."

# "TIMES AIN'T NOW WHAT THEY USED TO BE"

"Nip o' what?"

"That flask! Come, hand over! You've got a weapon concealed about you." He playfully tapped the Viking in the neighbourhood of the breast pocket, with a disappointing result. The assailed in turn, all solemnly, reached forth his hand; gripped his gun, and half presented it at the robber.

"Concealed weapon? Look at this. I have my instruc-

tions from the Court."

The juror grinned, saying, "From the Court! I see." Then he winked wonderfully; while the bailiff gazed into his eyes stolidly, meditatively. "Where's the gag?" continued the juror, stretching out a finger which rested, in the long run, on a barrel stopper. Suddenly his eyes began to brighten. He sniffed questionly—sniffed again—and again—took hold of the gun near the muzzle, set the stock on the floor, despite gentle resistance, extracted the stopper, took a mighty sniff; then hoisting, put the "lethal" tubes to his mouth. Then he shouted, "Boys!" Three of his comrades looked out, sniffed and advanced tumultuously. They clave to the gun.

"Do you mean to deprive me forcibly of my weapon?"

"Go to bed! Blazes! Thunder! Hell!"

They took that gun into the jury room. Tongues began to buzz in there soon. Then shortly they came out and desired to be taken into court.

The judge and clerk sat in the otherwise vacated chamber, sulky and dismal, when the twelve good and true men were ushered in. These rendered a verdict for the plaintiff (as they should have done ages ago), and then went away—all save one, who lingered to speak to the judge on some affair; whose nostrils in turn widened a trifle when the man came close to him.

The judge walked hotel-ward with the bailiff, taking care

to sample his breath by the way. It was innocent; but still the judicial mind was not at rest. However, he suppressed his suspicions, being satisfied with the verdict.

At parting the Viking spoke thus, "By the way, Judge,

that jury, as a whole, took my gun forcibly."

The judge knew him by now; or else intuition helped him. "What, two barrels? I should have said no more than two pints.' You're a devil of a lot, you denizens and natives, about here. It's worth a liberal—or libertine—education to have known you!"

"The judge," said the Viking, years afterwards, when he narrated to us of a later day that anecdote, "has got judgment enough to go 'round a Supreme Court and then have to spare for a whole legislature. It wasn't my fault! I knew those fellows never would come in without a 'snifter'—not for the refusal of a 'snifter,' but for cussedness. That would have been hard on the judge and on Charlie" (the sheriff). After a pause; long, long prolonged, he said, "Reckon he was convinced about that, too!"

Then all we listeners said, "You bet"; for most of us had known Charlie; while the judge's decisions, de facto, are those of a certain State Supreme bench much quoted in all

other courts of the republic.

### VISION

HE house of a deceased minister of the Crown was troubled in its members. Behold the sons and daughters thereof had gathered from the ends of America to spend a long holiday together beneath their mother's roof-tree, Frank from his precedents and politics in Dawson, Ralf from his power-houses and bridges somewhere at the back of Mexico, and Clara and the Manitoban baby from Winnipeg. For a time they were happy, in that theirs was a united family, each vying with each in cherishing all the others. But the trouble came; Ralf had fallen in love with Eugenie Ladoceur, whom they all had known from childhood; and Eugenie was ineligible. taught drawing, and her sister was the manager of a great department store, with a salary as big as if she had been a man, and this same managerial lady was talked about considerably more than even she deserved. You must see the ineligibility at the thousandth of a glance, or else you are a person of no standing.

Mrs. Gascoyne was U. E. L. in immediate descent, deriving through F. F. V. of Scotch ancestry. She said nothing, but thought, "ineligible." Clara would have proclaimed it from the housetops if necessary; only reception rooms are

more convenient.

Now Mrs. Gascoyne was yet a power in the land. Her husband had found a mate born to be a statesman's wife. She had brains, culture, tact, presence, and *mode*; but then she had sincerity, which is a drawback. She could not except to lovely, gracious "Genie" (Louise had had her sister, the one unselfish love of her too facile heart, minted in the convents), but—oh, that family!

Upon a day Ralf was going to Britannia to meet Eugenie.

They all knew it without explicit information. Frank, after an early luncheon, spoke straightwise to him.

The babies of the two houses had made mud pies together in amity, before Sieur Ladoceur went under, or the elder Gascoyne won eminence. Louise had practically supported and educated her family from the time of her own girlhood. She and Frank were the same age, a decade in advance of The Ladoceurs were anglicised more than most of their people; but their home life remained old French; greater hearth-homeliness and at the same time, greater ceremony, reign there. The difference catches us if we come intimately in contact with it. Frank knew this by experience; yet blundered by making an indirect appeal to Ralf's insularity. Besides the brief was not to Frank's liking. He took it for his sister's sake, mostly. He could have pleaded the contrary with eloquence; for he, too, was a democrat, believing in naught else than culture. He was persuaded that Ralf would please himself in any event, so irrational and self-contradictory an animal is man-even the most acute and the most subtle.

An non-analytic worshipper of the God of things-as-they-are, Ralf in turn accepted conventions, social and religious, as implicitly as the theory of strains in a truss; nay, more implicitly, for he had never questioned the former, while he had tested and closely investigated the other. Up to the present, Institution had held for him the validity of Natural Law. In the face of irreconcilable propositions this sound reasoner was unhappy. The setting of his heart's jewel was incontrovertibly vile. What though she descended from the aide-de-camp and kinsman of the courtly and invincible Frontenac—father, brothers, sister were off colour. A shiftless old loafer, gamblers, "tin-horns" at that—a woman scandal hissed at. Oh, yes, Louise was a brick; but she was talked about. It was impossible entirely to refute Frank's

asinine proposition. The words came home again, "We are of the best; Colonials though we be, we are aristocrats none the less—literally and etymologically—natural selections and descended of such; men who rose emergent, eminent in the formative period. A man owes as much to his stock as his stock gave him; he has no right to graft to a decadent stem—How do I know them decadent?—Well—er—the facts prove it."

Ralf replicated and Frank, who had crammed himself against the gorge of his judgment, took refuge in prevarication and professionalism, dodging the issue and ignoring the cogency of the answers. He insistently reverted to the biography of Eugenie's brothers and sister; the degeneration of her father. "Louise," quoth he, "the big, handsome, generous, typical free-woman—the she-Napoleon that she is—will never do. Eugenie is all right, capable of any culture, fitted for it; good, gentle, strong, too, but an 'impossible.'"

Then the slow, sure, thinker "became black as to his liver" and Frank listened to many plain truths and some

exaggerations. Ralf went on his way sore.

Brother's jobation, sister's pin-pricking sarcasm (she his pet and his worshipper, mother of the Marvellous Manitoban), the alienation and silence of the haughty mother, all his kin together, with the conventional self at odds with the Subliminal—it was a distracting pass for even the most resolute and successful of young men. It is saying much for his personality that the basic constancy never wavered in him. The mental picture of his own lady's clarity, grace, sweetness, adaptability, and gentle potency, held him as steadfast as the pole holds the pointing needle of his own transit, despite all perturbation.

His party had preceded him. Apparently it was a busy day in the city; scarcely any other visitors were about.

Said he to Louise, "A family party, I perceive, brother Charle and cousine Anna et cousine Josie, et Eugenie, et monsieur Moi—c'est cousin Ralf—bon! You girls may stay ashore and spoon with your respective cousins, or else hire a skiff. Genie and I go canoeing. Cousins are nice. Anna thinks so; and you, Louise, can make a visa-vis out of a saw-log. I don't mean that you're that, Josie."

He plumbed Louise's dark, deep eyes and in the depths discerned a lurking appreciation. She had always recognised, with fellow-feeling, Ralf's native resolution. His simplicity puzzled her. She had heretofore thought him stupid if not vacillating. He reflected in turn that Frank was a phrase-maker; she was Napoleonic. Lo! the perfection of feature, the will dominating even passion in the shadowed brow; the fiery nostrils, the lips firm and sensuous. Louise might be exceptionable, but she was splendid at all points, in face and in form, and volitionally.

My twain dawdled betwixt the promenade pier and the pavilion upon the so-delicious a day in late August. Des Chenes smote west and north away at their feet. From the east came the immemorial muted growl of the rapids, softening at intervals to a tenor note of complaint. Had it not been for a decided artemisean stamp and contour, Eugenie's figure might have been misnamed voluptuouslooking. Her countenance was pronouncedly aquiline. But the large, soft eyes and the rosy, tender mouth were suffused with much innocent winsomeness. Her voice, again, possessed unusual range and modulation, while the flex of neck, upturn of eye, pouting together of lips, before they gushed speech, were most reminiscent of a song-bird. She was full charged with Gallic animation. Unmistakably, wilfulness and passion were latencies in her; graving, moulding, carriage proclaimed it. But the expressional indices most potently declared that these stormy elements should in her subserve unselfishness—perhaps even abnegation.

They were a proper pair to look at. Gascoyne towered tall and broad beside the beauty. His was a trained athleticism. His hide was tanned almost to the shade of his tawny hair. Sagacity and deliberation predominated in his countenance. A mastiff's tenacity and passion slept beneath the dignity and good-nature.

Ralf had lately given Eugenie a copy of "Cyrano De Bergerac." They were talking about that great play; Ralf

intoning with relish,

"'Lean forth, adorable coquettes,
With masks and plumes and aigulettes.
We are the Gascony cadets!'

"I've lost the rest. Do not say you do not like it, you scion of the lean, Dane-dog, Gascony man!"

Eugenie shrugged adorably, he thought. "You are adorable—no you're not, either."

"I believe you spent days about Ladoceur-"

"And in the Archivist's office---"

"Searching for-"

"For traces of the Frontenac man. I found some in a mouldy box, in the loft of a dilapidated stone stable, and bought the parchment at the price of old rags, for you—you ingrate!"

"It is well to be born, but of what use nowadays?"

He was hopeless of satisfying "the understanding-feminine."

"I think it a horrible play," she proclaimed teasingly.

"Because it is a transcript of life, and not a sentimental drama ending in rose light and pleasing tears of sensibility?"

"Partly that. De Guich is an ignoble noble. Nor was it necessary to give the good gentleman such a nose, nor to spend so much wit on it."

"But he supplies the wit. No one else dares!"

"He jested, but was always unhappy."

"Unhappy? the man who could very truly say, 'and tonight, when I enter God's house, broadly shall I sweep the azure threshold with that which, despite of all, I carry forth unblemished and unbent.' He all unhappy? No, no. He had lived."

"Lived to suffer, yes. Oh, she was stupid, she was selfish,

she wantonly tortured him. She should have seen!"

"Can women see so well, Genie?" Her breast sank and rose; but she looked him fair and true in the eyes—"because," he proceeded, "if so, you know I love you."

She was powerless to turn away her eyes. She gasped a trifle, while that delight of his eyes, "the black blush," shone vivid through the exquisite brune. Surprise was dominant, but an experienced eye might have pierced to the elemental womanly fear and delight.

His—the chaste and strenuous—books, had been iron, masonry, concrete, rock, and no lady looks though; so that when a mist swept the kind pitchy depths the world tottered

for him.

Was he mistaken? Was she? Her naïve word deepened the tan in turn.

"Oh, Ralf, I am so glad."

"My love—my undefiled!—Here comes the canoe. Now we will go away out there" (he indicated all the sunfilled waste) "and be happy. It is like being in a glass case, fitted with gramophones, here."

He beached and overturned the canoe, examined the gumming, and ascertained the integrity of the bark and the lining. Des Chenes should have been flattered. Never before

### Vision

had he taken such trouble when going out. They were old enemies.

"How," quoth Eugenie, "did you get that canoe?"

"Got some river-men, who live in the village, to bring it

up from the 'sorting-gap' last evening."

"You knew how I love a canoe with 'a lord of the paddle to steer,' "she exclaimed as the sure, long, swift, unjarring glide began; for he was "a lord of the paddle."

"Likewise a canoe loves my 'little squaw,' because you

treat her with consideration and respect."

These useless brothers, these country cousins of many varying degrees of consanguinity and rusticity had "acquired merit" by teaching his sweetheart the art, trade, and mystery of canoeing, at any rate. She could swim like a tireless mermaid and even make a fair attempt at navigating a "burled" saw-log.

The Peace of God found them. Speech was needless a while. Their eyes made that; deep answering deep, as ever the vessel swept triumphant up the sun-path. The blissful, blushing girl before him, Ralf was stilly elate. He had burst all barriers, alone, and by the strong hand. He scorned that hesitant who dreamed that vile contact could smirch celestial nacre, that cad who deemed, an hour agone, that the fortuitous circumstance of mere worldly position represented aught in the face of natal character; perceiving clearly and permanently that nothing constitutes social difference, provided fineness of spiritual fibre informs the personality. He knew himself, now, for earthenware alongside cunningly carven bronze.

The bay lay hull down in time. A purple haze blurred the northern shore and deepened into ultramarine on the Laurentian hill slopes. The deciduous trees had begun to turn, while never a leaf had wilted. Great reaches of field and pasture, interspersed with the gold and cardinal glow of

maples, or the comparative gloom of changeless evergreens, variegated all the wide southern coastwise stretches. Eastward the spray whitened like a snowdrift, where the rapids plunged. It was a day for even the moribund to joy in mere existence.

Ralf laid in his paddle; moved carefully across to her place. The lips met in the long, long kiss of troth-plight.

"Paradise, Genie; you and I alone in this good old bit of

the good old world—Good old gods!"

"I have touched heaven, chérie. But they must never hurt you."

"They--- Oh, the saints? I thought you meant my

Theys."

"May I not thank them, Ralf?"

"Most assuredly! I do even on the off chance—That's brutal, though. But you never answered my question. Does a woman know?"

" I----"

"Slyboots!"

"But I thought-"

The honest man in him blushed, but the knave got assurance.

"I thought you—as a Protestant——"

The scoundrel laughed exultantly.

"I suppose I am in a way. I think I am a Presbyterian, 'adherent,' as much because it is the church of my people as anything. I am no theological expert. Your faith is one a man could live clean in, and die bravely in. I should not like to change—or see you change—out of impulse. If one grew into new beliefs it would be different. There's one thing, however, I could not stand my own, that is the interference of Presbyter or Priest."

"That is a small matter, mon gentilhomme. Our Lady is

above them."

"Chère ami!"

"Good word! We will be sure lovers, but 'pards' as well. Hullo! Tricks? Des Chenes, you jade!"

A Norther had scouted over the hills and fallen upon the slumbering waters. The Northers steal about like unquiet ghosts and make boating on that lake an irksome pleasure. The scout had caught the canoe broadside. Soon the skirmishers followed and the calm was broken utterly. Ralf headed for the shore that lay in the bay. There was no other feasible landing. His vasty thighs and shoulders bestood him well then.

An interval—the line of battle forming—the waves heaved—another and the waves leaped. So it went until the white-caps ramped and raced shoreward. The steersman swept the seaway with an eye that traversed all the strategy of the lake; thinking of foregone boyish days when they used to coquette. Now there was no flirtatious joy in his eye. Responsibility had bitten him of late years. Care is the price of success.

Deep down he was angry. The uncritical are anthropomorphic. Des Chenes, it would appear, was playing the elusive, feminine rôle. To be avenged on himself she struck at his true love. Believing that he believed he was a churchman, this wholesome out-of-doors man knew really of none other power than the great cosmic one, intelligent apparently, which is normally stern, sometimes infinitely kind; invariably ironic.

Eugenie had taken a paddle when he turned the prow. It was as well, he concluded; occupation kills apprehension.

"See that the cushion is well under your knees, sweetheart; else you'll be sorry," was what he said.

The waves spurned the canoe so as to make it difficult at once to preserve the course and to make progress. The sun

<sup>&</sup>quot;She is so. All men recognise the mother-woman."

shone clear as ever. The wind rose and rose. Soon an un-

intermittent gale prevailed.

Eugenie's stroke began to intermit after a long space of this toil. Ralf rebelled mutely against her exertions. No less the waves were combing at the crests—ground swell combers. The lash overtook and deluged his back. Eugenie heard him swearing. She liked that. It gave her heart. She stuck to her work determinedly, never attempting to turn about; so much she knew. But her voice came to him up the wind.

"What is it, dear?"

"We must do a trick, sweetheart. When I call, 'ship!'

lay in your paddle."

The waves roared and raced foaming, but at regular intervals would roll up a great, broad-backed fellow, as wide as a house, smooth and dun. Ralf bided such a sending and it came. "Ship!" he called and pivoted the staunch canoe before the next comber came on; and now they faced the ramping squadrons. Semi-diagonally the prow met and climbed the gnashing roarer, and the many following.

"Never mind the paddle, sweetheart. Bail if you like. Careful, beauty!—Ah, would you?" A comber fleeing to the rear had pitched an extra quantity of spume over

Eugenie.

Now Eugenie could face her lover. "Oh, it is terrible, mon ami; but it is lovely, too!" she called, before setting

to the work of bailing.

The motion, the seethe and the shriek, the dampness and the sting of the torn fleeces, uplifted her. She showed the face of a pythoness. These were an inspiration to her, plumbing hereditary depths, intoxicating, deliriating.

"Genie, take your knife, cut your boot laces-and all

other things that can hamper movement."

"There is danger, my love?"

"Not much; but there is nothing like being prepared. We'll beat them, I tell you!"

He looked a man. The great, velvet, Valkyrian eyes exulted him.

"There was never a woman in all the ages like my Genie!" he bellowed.

"But the men!" she piped. "Ah! mes braves. They know and keep cool. They laugh, even, or swear, or shut their lips close—and fight and do not care—except for us. And one of these chosen, I have for a lover. I am safe!—And at any rate I do not care—since they—"

"You are fit to know all, my own. There is risk, of

course. But we-we two together must win-will win."

"I say I do not care, moi. I want to live—with you, for you. We spoke about beliefs. They do not matter. We will be together whatever comes."

"We are by no means come to that. If it must be,

though, 'the great waters shall wed us.'"

The conversation was fragmentary, the sentences delivered in broken snatches; tuneful, alto pipe waited upon by melodious bass roar. The slight additional strain of talking caused Ralf to become aware of limitations; a new sensation, not pleasurable. Strain brings fatigue, to the most robust, if sustained overtime. None the less he continued.

"There is one thing better, to live and let the silly kirks join us. I mean to have some more of this life, with you."

Another comber drenched his love and gave her more work of its surplusage.

There came to her an unwonted sound.

"I should have sworn the more," roared he responsive to her looks, most contritely. "I didn't mean to groan. I left my coat ashore when I beached the canoe."

"Your coat?" amazedly she answered.

"We could turn and run for it if we had something like

a headsail to steady her. We could do the trick, I think, then."

Forthwith the girl's fingers were at her belt. There was

fumbling, a rending, a wiggle.

"Will this do?" she asked ashamedly but exultingly, indicating the tweed of a bicycle skirt which had been torn down the seam; conscious of male eyes upon bloomers of like cloth.

"You sensibly garbed angel!" Then he howled his instructions as to rigging, ending in, "Do not budge until

I say, 'Hoist'!—then be prompt."

He must wait until a black roller offered a friendly shoulder. The interval was full of speculation. He knew that none of the frail skiffs at the boathouse could stand these seas, but certain yachts were swinging at anchor near the pier. And, oh for a hand of those blackguardly brothers to succor his Eugenie!

The wave came. Again the superb craftsmanship and its consequent success. "Hoist!" and prompt as a riverman Eugenie obeyed. The reversed prow hesitated, hung for an instant, then leaped away from the pursuant breaker, rose over the next like a mallard and headed shoreward, racing amain.

"You did your trick, mon brave!" she called over her shoulder, for she was once more aface of the direction of the course. Soon, having little to occupy her attention, the terror took hold. "I am frightened," she cried wailfully. "Never let Them—mine—know it. They're strangers.

"Never let Them—mine—know it. They're strangers. We are safe in shallow water in twenty minutes at this rate.

More-I-we-could swim ashore now."

Her spirit rallied loyally.

"I will not be saved alone. You said together or

<sup>&</sup>quot;But you must not go out."

"What should I do alone, my heart?"

"Comfort my bird! true heart! We win and be damn'd to them. We shall live, not die, together! There's Charle and Josie and the girls and a mob of women—and neuters," he continued, hoarsely, paddling and staring. "Over goes Josie's skiff. Charle takes off from the pier's side. He can't unmoor that yacht alone. You'll drown, you ass, to no purpose! No one man can navigate that clumsy bitch alone." He croaked and panted by now.

A "dead-head" is a saw-log so saturated as to float approximately vertical, slightly below the surface. When the butt beds in the silt it is called a "snag." The storm had loosed the anchorage of a number of the latter. They bobbed about, "dead-heads" once more; the tops occasionally emerging, like the snouts of plundering dolphins, in the trough, anon to be submerged by the following crest.

The canoe slid down a breaker. There in the shifting pit of the trap lurked her worst enemy. Eyesight, thought, act, were nearly one; but might not avail. The frail hull lit fair amidships on the log's end. It shattered her bottom as a "Whitehead" that of a battleship. The jolt threw Eugenie clear. Ralf, all astrain and contorted, was tossed midway on the snout. It got his solar plexus, just touching him. A punch on any of the outposts of the great sympathetics spells demoralisation, dehumanisation, oftentimes.

When Ralf became an ego again, the inevitable compensation followed. He was a drowsing merman, heaving in the sunny swell of a sea "where it is always afternoon," his head couched in the crook'd elbow of his own sea maid. Well he knew that arm; but he was too languid to look up. He cared nothing, remembered nothing—was merely aware of bliss, bliss with a drawback, for a bull-seal was bellowing wildly somewhere. It was annoyingly arousing. He stared about, looked up and lived and was a man of shame.

### From Far Dakota and Otherwhere

Strained, desperate, awatch of that bull-seal, Genie's profile smote him and with it horror, the memory as of a loathsome dream. Shock, loss of self, inbreathing of suffocating waters that waked the beast, clutching at shreds of the canoe, at that "dead-head"—clutching at something?—that—that lived—and strove to quiet him in human speech.

The waves were as nothing to him, spent. "I have been no dog. I will not insult the saviours of drowning men. I have been a loathly octopus. Ye powers, let me save her, then give it to me." And again, "To me, my little soulto me. Rest you, rest you here. I am me now."

The leal heart responded in a gasp. "Oh, this is so

' comfy '-what do you mean?"

"My grasping at you."

"Grasping? Never once. You were mad. Shoved me away—called out again and again 'Keep clear, sweetheart!—Keep clear!—Clear, I tell you!—Keep clear, damn you!' That is what you said. Oh, I am done."

And he was done. The waves washed over just as that bull-

seal—one of the "tin-horn" brothers—said:

"Let go, Gascoyne. Give her to me. Can you keep up, though? Hell!—" Ralf went under. The impact drove him to the sandy bottom, a scant three feet below. The shoaly beach extends far out in the bay. Charlemagne proved his get and christening then. He found his feet, plucked up the shoulders of these two, beneath arms as lusty as a young stallion's forelegs and began to drag them ashore bodily. Whelmed repeatedly, overturned oftentimes, he stuck to his burden like a bull-terrier, a man, and a Kanuck. The saints, and more exalted personages, got opinions on their governance which cost the critic sore penance at next confession, I doubt. A Canadiene's profanity, when in a dangerous place, would curl the dead horsehair of Voltaire's wig.

Louise met them waist deep. Provident, she cloaked the half-nude Genie; then, turning, plucked up the tottering Ralf. She was a woman of stature and development. The spasmodic impulse might have sufficed to bear his bulk to the dry sands. But her contact waked him and he broke away rudely.

"You must not trouble. Nothing matters now. But I'll—die—dry." He rushed ashore and crashed down, sense-

less as a tree.

Two hours after that collapse Ralf wakened sound and whole. One instant again was provided wherein to revel and luxuriate. His mother bent over him. Momently the woes trooped about him like the harpies. She saw the change and misunderstood.

"My son-my nearest! You are hurt."

Petulantly as a very new-born son he rejected her touch,

and lay staring forlornly.

But anon a vision of a night came back. An uncomfortable camp makes a man remember home, and home's soul. The realisation comes only to men fully mature. Inly he had said, "Tis the best a man can do. He cannot begin to pay even. If love is not its own reward then they go without any. But a fellow can show he knows. I will."

It broke even the pride of despair. He nestled and cuddled to her, an action more poignant—more appealing—in the self-sufficing man than it had been in his baby days.

"I know what mothers go through, mine. Don't feel hurt. You can't help me here, even you. I am sound and —done for——"

Thoroughly nonplussed, she could only croon and moan

over her favourite.

"She's dead and I'm a cur," he continued in the unresonant monotone. "She lied to save my self-respect. I'll tell you!"

## From Far Dakota and Otherwhere

She who had heard his deeds rehearsed so lately, listened to another version; at the ending sentence averting her face while her shoulders shook convulsively. Then she turned a weirdly grim face towards him.

"And you did that? Dress and come with me."

He arose, preparing to look on a dead face. His mother met him at the door, unspeaking. She led him across the roomy hall of the summer-house, thrown open to the incursion of such eminent wayfarers; then opened a door without knocking, ceremony proclaiming death's presence, or utter absorption.

A pale, pale Eugenie reclined in the depths of a vast padded easy chair. The sun flooded over her through an uncurtained wide window. Ralf's heart swerved, leaped—and his head swam. He fled to her, like one winged, took her about the knees and buried his face in her lap.

"What have they done?—what told my love?—my dear love?" cried Eugenie. Over his head sounded a kiss, and

the rich laughter of eld.

"My daughter, he said, 'Keep clear, God damn you!' and

has come to apologise."

"It was unpardonable, under the circumstances, but you overstate it. Oh, mother"—a waver in the rich cadences—"Handsome, kind, humorous—you have forgiven me?—Teach me. I have heard Scotland loved France once."

"Small wonder, the Scot proves his judgment, even yet, by choosing a mate among the daughters of New France, to mother his men-children. I thought my son had gone mad. Then I thought he might be hurt to the death. Then I knew, for my mannie told me. But, though I feared he might die in coming—I brought him. I forgot that joy sometimes kills! Ralf, my bairnie!—I love you well, my wee lady. You are worthy of even him." She vanished.

## Vision

A small, soft, timid hand wandered tenderly over, then more bravely amid that tossed, tawny mane.

"Look at me," she said.

He did it avidly. "Mother is sincerity, Genie."

"Do I need to be told so, Ralf?—What did she mean?"
"I thought you had died. But, Ho! Ho! the great waters failed. It was a royal betrothal, though. We saw each

others' souls-my soul!"

"Still you thought I lied."

"I'm precious proud of myself, I assure you. Won't

you forgive me? How is Charle, though?"

"Never mind Charle—But oh, you are thoughtful! He also is un brave, but—he will keep. But he is a man and is content to do things—and cares not to be enquired after by another man who can do things. A woman, that is a coward—Don't stare, I mean me—"

"Yes, like Jeanne D'Arc! I'll beat you if you say it

again."

"Beat me, after swear—My all! My all! They—mine

-were good to me. They kept you, perhaps."

"We shall never fall out over that, ma Canadienne. We are to be friends, remember. I have something to do, however. Clara and Frank shall do the 'kow-tow.' Excuse me a minute."

"Come here! Frank has—is—Oh, never was such a gen-

tleman! He has been here already."

"She must—The 'Mater Imperatrix' will make her, if I don't. There are no family differences to be concealed from you now. You are one of us."

Now Eugenie grew very angry.

"Do you wish me to believe that men—that my one man—are brave brutes merely? I will never——Come in!"

Clara fled to him, and hugged. He endured it as a sullen boarhound endures the attentions of an importunate child.

## FROM FAR DAKOTA AND OTHERWHERE

Then Clara turned to Eugenie—she was a slightly gushful young matron normally, but people who could see remarked upon her distant resemblance to her mother at times. She *could* be dignified.

"I did not come to explain anything, Eugenie. I came

to ask you if we might start anew. You saved---"

"He does not deserve it. Do not let him hear it. Yes, we will start anew, if you care to."

Clara kissed her there and then.

"He was going to beat me and make you 'kow-tow'—whatever that is."

"He is fearfully and brutally and malely stupid."

"Think if Mr.—if Frank—,"

"Eh?"—the door stood partly open. "Were you speak-

ing to me?"

"Damn you! I want to speak to you. Never mind! Resist not evil. I only want to shake you, so don't wiggle. I'll soon be through.—Good old man!"

The ladies had looked on, astonished.

"I'll attend to you female women shortly. Clara, if you don't bring the Manitoban I'll take you girls, one after the other, and toss you. He enjoys it—you wouldn't."

The women went "daring" him and the men shook hands

once more.





